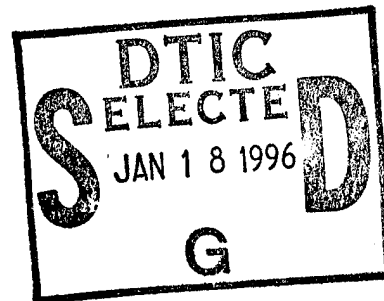


# NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA



## THESIS



### EMERGING MICRONESIAN ISLAND NATIONS: CHALLENGES FOR UNITED STATES POLICY

by

**Edward C. Camacho**

June, 1995

Thesis Advisor:  
Second Reader:

Claude A. Buss  
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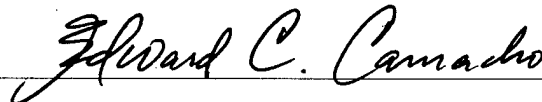
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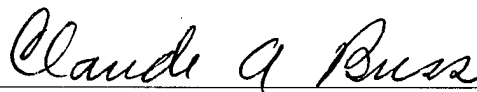
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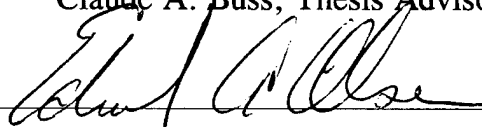


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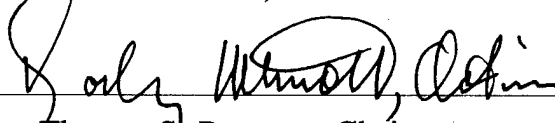
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## ABSTRACT

This thesis is a study of Micronesia and its various peoples. It is an introduction to the geography and history of a region that is not well known, but rendered strategically important, at one time to Japan, and presently to the United States.

Micronesia is one of three major regions of the Pacific. The others are Melanesia and Polynesia. The region's inhabitants, Micronesians, are a diverse group of people with a blend of several different ethnicities, languages, and cultures. Over half of these people are Americans, and they occupy a place of importance in the national interest of the United States.

For both historic and strategic reasons, the United States stands to gain by increasing its present level of support to the Micronesian Islands, including its territories, and their inhabitants as they pursue a better future of peace, quiet, and prosperity. Without an enhanced American support, the islanders will lag further in development and will look more attractive to other nations, particularly Japan, China, and Korea.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This thesis is a study of Micronesia and its various peoples. It is an introduction to the geography and history of a region that is not well known, but strategically important at one time to Japan, and presently to the United States.

The great Pacific is often taken for granted as an "American Lake," but the strategic and economic values of the scattered island nations and the United States territories within its basin were proved before and during the Second World War. The major problems in Micronesia today include poverty, pollution, overpopulation (in relation to the size of the islands), disease, and corruption. The past half century of administrative support from the United States was not sufficient to overcome the ills that were rooted in the rule of three former colonial powers: Spain, Germany, and Japan.

The new nations of Micronesia, specifically the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of Belau, plus the two U.S. flag territories of Guam and the Northern Marianas are often overlooked while the major industrial countries on each side of the Pacific are experiencing rapid economic growth and becoming increasingly interdependent. However, even at the risk of the islands becoming worse than "Third World" countries, the inhabitants of Micronesia and the U.S. territories are continuing to pursue their goals of political sovereignty and economic self-reliance. Their alternative strategies are independence, free association, commonwealth, and statehood. The statehood strategy would apply incorporation into the union as a full member of the American political family.

At present, all the Micronesian entities are "non-states" whether they are an "unincorporated territory" like Guam, a "commonwealth" like the Northern Marianas, or "free association" like the rest. In any case, they are not fully recognized by the Constitution of the United States although they accept and practice our philosophy of democracy and free market.

Other nations besides the United States are naturally interested in the strategic and economic values of the scattered islands within the Pacific basin. In this post-Cold War

era, some of these countries including Japan and China, are also looking more and more attractive to Micronesians, especially for economic development prospects and other progressive opportunities.

As the American deficit rises and the threats of communism evaporate, the Americans tend to lose sight of the strategic values of the islands. Micronesians cannot be blamed if they look more towards the emerging Asian economies for support in order to sustain or improve their own standard of living. Some of these Asian countries, too, are beginning to open up and answer to the call of the island nations.

Unlike the huge assistance provided to Japan and Western Europe after the Second World War, the Micronesian Islands never received an aid package or development assistance comparable to the Marshall Plan. After the United Nations approved the United States Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands mandate in 1947, there was more effort put into *reporting* the islands' progress to the United Nations than into progress itself. Americans were more concerned with strategic value than with the welfare of the people.

The downsizing of the United States armed forces since the end of the Cold War has resulted in a reduced military presence in Micronesia. Furthermore, the lack of interest in the Pacific Basin by the Department of Defense and by both U.S. Interior and State Departments has raised further questions about the American commitment to the welfare of the islanders. Doubts are also deepening in Micronesian minds about the willingness of the United States to provide for the islands' security against both "foreign and domestic" threats. The welfare of Micronesia seems to be omitted from American considerations of Pacific policy and world affairs.

In its own national interest, the United States needs to reawaken to the value of Micronesia and enhance its present level of support. This can be done by more material support for island development accompanied with the education to either produce or obtain the appropriate material needs. It can further be done by offering every encouragement to the native peoples as they seek their long term goals of sovereignty and self-reliance.

The American support should be defined not only in terms of economic aid to the booming tourist, service, garment, fishing, and construction industries on some of the

larger islands of Micronesia, but also in terms of educational assistance, leadership and management, medical and healthcare programs, modern communications, environmental protection, and all the other peaceful, essential, and appropriate elements of nation-building. Also, the new concept of "cooperative engagement" should be extended to the islands in the great Pacific.

The success of these islands and their peoples depends on the types of assistance the United States provides them. Native peoples need the know-how to make them self-reliant and competitive with the rest of the world. To them, self-reliance is far better than perishable gifts or those that are hard to operate or maintain.

This thesis concludes that further American support to Micronesia is of mutual benefit. Without it, the islanders will lag further in development and will look more attractive to other nations, particularly Japan, China, and Korea. Economic investments from these Asian countries have already penetrated Micronesia to an astounding degree. If the strategic value, free market, or the democratic future of these islands is not to be lost, appropriate American attention and substantial economic assistance is urgently required.





## **PREFACE**

### **THESIS DESCRIPTION AND DEFINITION OF TERMS**

For the purpose of this study, only Guam and the six former districts of the Micronesian Islands that were once administered by the United States under the United Nations Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (TTPI) will be covered. These islands were and are still the only ones that are legally covered by the United States permanent defense responsibility. The former districts of the TTPI included the Marshall Islands, Ponape (Pohnpei), Truk (Chuuk), Yap, Palau (Belau), and the Northern Mariana Islands.

These six former island districts recently terminated their TTPI status, and as a result, four political entities emerged. Three of them have free association relationships with the United States and they are now known as the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), and the Republic of Belau (ROB). These three independent island nations are sometimes called "freely associated states," or FAS. The fourth political entity is now known as the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). Where the three freely associated states are considered independent and are members of the United Nations, the CNMI and Guam remain territories of the United States, sometimes viewed as American colonies.

The term "Micronesia" is Greek, meaning "small islands." The term "Micronesian" throughout the thesis, except where otherwise specified, includes all the people in the region, and is also used to describe everything that pertains to the islands.

My hypothesis is that for both historic and strategic reasons, the United States should enhance its present level of support to the Micronesian Islands, its territories of Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and their inhabitants, as they pursue a better future of peace, quiet, and prosperity. In its own national interest, the United States needs to reawaken to the value of the Micronesian environment as a fundamental factor in providing for its own security in the entire East Asia/Pacific region.

The thesis begins with the study of the region and its people and it traces its history through the centuries of colonial administration. It continues with the story of American acquisition of these island territories through World War II and the Cold War. It then studies the interests and problems of the islanders and the policies of the United States and outside powers toward Micronesia's future.

To understand Micronesia and the issues and concerns it has with the United States as well as others, the following questions will be addressed:

- (1) What are the Micronesian Island nations and the United States territories in the region?
- (2) Who are the inhabitants? Where did they originate from? And what significant events did they experience in their past that led them to their present conditions?
- (3) What are the islands' economic resources?
- (4) Why have these islands fallen behind other countries economically? And, what are they doing to catch up?
- (5) How has the United States helped the islands? and
- (6) Did the drawdown of United States forces and the budget crunch contribute to the erosion of the American perception of the strategic value of these island nations and territories?

Briefly, this thesis looks at three general questions about the Micronesian region and the issues at hand: a) Where and what stage are the islands at now in their economic and political developments? b) where might they go from where they are now, and how are they most likely going to get there? and c) What are the best policies for both the United States and the Micronesian Island nations as well as the U.S. territories to follow?

Other challenges the study covers are those the United States currently deals with regarding its insular possessions and Micronesia. These are as follows:

- (1) What are the political status options that Guam has considered, and for its own good, what should the island consider in the future?
- (2) Should Guam become a commonwealth and risk the United States' sovereign control, if in the long run the people decide to become totally independent? Will this

commonwealth pursuit be considered a movement toward secession from the Union? If yes, what are the legal parameters to prevent such a movement?

(3) If Guam becomes a commonwealth, how much freedom should the United States grant the citizens of that island? Should the United States consider the model of Australia, New Zealand, and Canada in their relations to Great Britain as an example of the form of commonwealth to grant Guam? Or should it look at its own example of its relations to the former United States Commonwealth of the Philippines?

(4) If Guam becomes a commonwealth and later chooses to become a state, will the United States accept it as an equal member of the Union with two senators in the Senate and a number of representatives in the House of Congress despite its small number of American citizens, approximately 170,000 of them. Will the United States follow the example of Hawaii and Alaska for the future of Guam?

(5) Can the United States afford to keep Guam either in its current political status or as a commonwealth and risk being labeled again as a "colonial power" by the natives and other countries?

(6) What can the United States do to maintain goodwill relationships with Guam, the CNMI, and the Micronesian Islands in order to be able to secure its interests in the region? Can the United States support the islands to become an American economic haven like the Cayman Islands under the British? Will this materialize and continue even while the islands become independent and the United States keeps its military access rights in the area? Will the people in the region allow this to happen? How much will the United States be willing to commit to this proposal and for how long? Will it continue to take a serious part in the whole program even while it suffers a tremendous decline in its own economy on the mainland?

The thesis further looks into the following research questions in consideration of the perspectives of each of the island polities in the Micronesian region:

1) What will the future political status be for Guam, CNMI, FSM, RMI, and ROB?

(a) Guam: Will it remain an "unincorporated, unorganized" territory like American Samoa, Wake, and Johnston Islands? Or will it be independent with its own defense and currency like the Philippines? Will it be independent with a "free association" status with the United States like the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Belau, all "independent with strings"? Or will it be a commonwealth like its neighbor to the north, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, or like Puerto Rico in the Caribbean? Or will it become a state of the Union like Hawaii and Alaska?

(b) The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI): Will it remain a commonwealth like Puerto Rico? Will it become independent like the Philippines, FSM, RMI, or ROB? Will it pursue a United States "statehood" status alone or together with Guam? Or will it unite with Guam and pursue independence together?

(c) The Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) which includes the states of Pohnpei, Kosrae, Chuuk, and Yap: Will the FSM maintain the current relationship and political status of "free association" with the United States, or will it pursue one of Guam's or the CNMI's options?

(d) The Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI): Because it also has a "free association" political status with the United States, will it pursue the same options the FSM has?

(e) The Republic of Belau (ROB): Because the ROB just completed its transition from being the last "strategic trust" to a "free association," similar to the FSM's and RMI's, it would be difficult to project its intent to pursue another political status option in the near future. But the situation still raises the following questions: How long will it maintain its current political relationship with the United States? Will the "free association" status last the whole fifty years the two respective countries agreed upon, or will one of them unilaterally terminate the agreement early as authorized in the compact?

If total or complete "independence" as a separate state altogether is the desired political status for the future of the Micronesian Islands and the two United States flag

territories in the region, what is the likelihood of continuing the philosophy of democracy and American values?

What are the local resources and how can these resources help the inhabitants achieve their goals of international identity, political sovereignty, and self-reliance as well as their desires for peace, quiet, and prosperity? How can the United States further assist each island group to the extent allowed by the United States constitutional process?

In the United States, what is likely to be the trend in the perception of the importance of the islands? And, how will the people of the United States respond to the islanders' choices on their future political status? Will the United States accept whatever the people of the islands choose when the natives exercise their self-determination rights? Will the United States possibly treat any, or all, of these islands as eligible for statehood status following the example of Hawaii or Alaska?

During the process of political change, what degree of help should be extended by the United States to each of the island nations and U.S. territories: for the good of the local population and/or, for the national interests of the United States?

To the rest of the world, the resulting political status will determine how successful the United States in its past fifty years of administrative support to the islands in the region. If the islanders choose to become independent and, later, their respective governments fail, the United States will suffer from a negative image. But if the islanders' economy and political structure succeed, then the United States image will be positive and the country will be envied by others. The United States, however, will be more envied by others if the islanders decide to become full members of the Union, giving the country a more positive image. The islanders' desire to have this status is a signal to the international community that the United States must have done something really good that the natives of the islands wish to become states like the fifty other ones of the American political family.

Of course, there will be those with the perception that the United States has brainwashed the islanders and is only accepting the islands as states for its own selfish interests. This perception, however, could easily be corrected if the international

community witnesses the process of the peoples' decision to have their islands become states.

One of the conclusions reached from this study indicates that for the good of both Micronesians and Americans, statehood might well be the goal of Micronesians and Americans alike. Under this political status, the United States would not have to be burdened with foreign assistance to Micronesia. Instead, provided that the people of Micronesia wish for statehood, the United States would incorporate the islands fully into the American political system. In doing so, it would only be in accordance with the terms found in the United States Constitution, one of which is in the Preamble--"to form a more perfect Union...."

The methodology for this research includes a study of the area as well as interviews with concerned island and United States government officials. Historical and official documents serve as primary reference sources.

Many books provided the much needed background, but those deserving special mention include: John C. Dorrance's "The United States and the Pacific Islands"; Don A. Farrell's "History of the Northern Mariana Islands"; and David Stanley's "Micronesia Handbook". The Micronesia Handbook now has a new copyright owner: Neil M. Levy of Live Oak Press.

The Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California provided the perfect environment for research. Dr. Claude A. Buss and Dr. Edward A. Olsen served as my thesis advisor and second reader, respectively. Without their encouragement and guidance toward the completion of this thesis, I would have never completed the work I had started and, in fact, had always wanted to do. My deepest gratitude for all their help in completing this thesis and for their patience with me.

Great thanks goes out to a friend who also provided a great deal of time to help me with my English. Lincoln Neighbors of Monterey, through the Micronesians he has met and readings he has done about the region, has developed a love for Micronesia, which motivated him to help me with my English. One day he will finally pay a visit to the islands and meet more indigenous Micronesians he already calls friends.

Special thanks also go out to all my Micronesian friends and relatives who call themselves something they are most proud of, Carolinians, Chamorros, Belauans, Yapese, Chuukese, Mortlockese, Mokilese, Pohnpeians, Kosraeans, Marshallese, and others that make this list incomplete.

Finally, my greatest appreciation to my family for their patience, understanding, and love. Somehow, they continually reminded me that I am still a family man. They know better than I how difficult it is to balance a thesis work and quality time with them. To my children, Winfred, Chinnelle, and Yolani, I thank them dearly for preserving my sense of humor, no matter how hectic things got. To my wife, Lynn, my most sincere thanks for playing the roles of both mother and father in my countless absences while I researched in distant places. I thank her also for the millions of coffee cups she brought to the table in order to keep me going. Without her, always standing by me, I doubt if I could ever have finished this study. To all, a grateful thanks, and I am in your debt forever.

Responsibility, of course, lies with me, and I welcome comments, critiques, and questions that may be addressed in or incorporated into possible future editions. All these, however, must be forwarded to: P.O. Box 82, Kolonia, Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia, 96941.





## I. INTRODUCTION TO MICRONESIA: LAND AND PEOPLE

**"When you are small, you are frequently ignored."**

Former Governor of Guam , **Joseph Ada**

The great Pacific is often taken for granted as an "American Lake," but the strategic and economic values of the small scattered island nations and the United States territories within its basin were proved beyond doubt before and during the Second World War.

The Micronesian region, in particular, proved its strategic significance when the Japanese fortified it to prepare for war and the attack on Pearl Harbor almost three decades prior to World War II. The region proved its value further during the war itself when United States forces used some of the same islands to launch attacks against Japan. Later, the islands again showed how useful they were when the United States used them to contain Japan, and afterwards, the former Soviet Union.

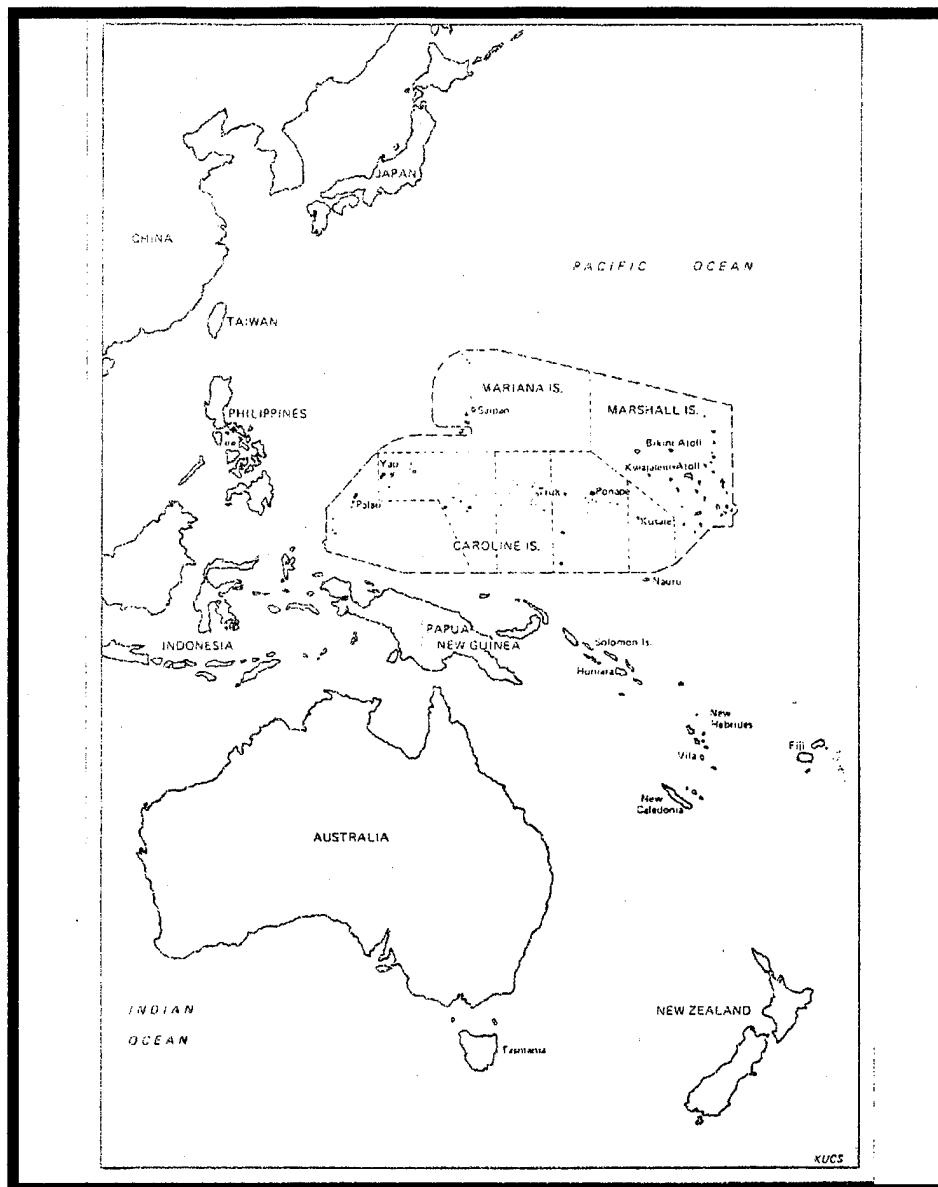
Micronesia is one of three major regions in the Pacific Ocean. The others are Polynesia and Melanesia. The various peoples of the Pacific are little known and understood. Among these peoples are the Micronesians who also call themselves Marshallese, Kosraeans, Pohnpeians, Chuukese, Yapese, Palauans, Carolinians, Chamorros, and many others whose populations are too small to merit identification.

David Stanley, in his first edition of "Micronesia Handbook: Guide To An American Lake," states that:

Apart from atomic blasts at Bikini and Enewetak in the late '40s and early '50s, this vast Pacific area between Hawaii and the Philippines has received little attention.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The passage appears on the back cover of David Stanley's "Micronesia Handbook," (Chico: Moon Publications, 1985). Today there is a third edition of this informative handbook that is a 'must read' for anyone interested in the region. [On 21 March 1995, I received the response letter to my request for permission from the copyright owner to use certain material from the book. This letter, however, came



**Figure 1: The Micronesian Islands in their place in the East Asia/Pacific region. Source: Grant K. Goodman and Felix Moos, eds., "The United States and Japan: Micronesia and Papua New Guinea."**

from a gentleman by the name of Neil M. Levy of Live Oak Press who has apparently purchased the copyright to the Micronesia Handbook from Stanley, and claims that he will be writing the next edition. I got the permission, but based on the following conditions: 1. That the copyright be indicated in the introduction to the thesis; 2. That the copyright appear on every page in which I use an illustration or map; and 3. That I will not sell the thesis commercially, but if I decide to publish any portion of it, I would coordinate with Mr. Levy to assure his copyright is not violated. Neil M. Levy of Live Oak Press now owns the copyright to Micronesia Handbook. To save others the trouble I experienced, write directly to Mr. Levy, Live Oak Press, 1950 Addison Street, Suite 102, Berkeley, California 94704, or call (510) 843-1147 for permission to use material from the books.]

The reason for this is not so much that people do not have any interest in Micronesia, but because the region was closed off for almost three decades, both before, and after the Second World War.

With the exception of Guam, Micronesia was closed off during the Japanese occupation after World War I. After the Second World War, the area was further considered a military strategic region for the United States during the implementation of the strategies of "denial" and "containment". These two strategies played significant roles during some of the most intensive periods of the Cold War.

In 1982, in his opening statement before the Senate regarding the future status of the Micronesian Islands, Senator S.I. Hayakawa of California confirmed "how little... we (knew)" about the region. The Senator said:

In the past 2 years that I have had the honor of presiding over the Subcommittee on East Asian and Pacific Affairs, I have come to realize...how little we in the United States know about the vast Pacific Basin, its people, and its incredible resources.

...Micronesia sits astride the crossroads of the Pacific, so occupies an important strategic position. Its people, though not numerous, have an ancient culture and a varied history. They have been under our tutelage for many years, and we will need to know more about them.<sup>2</sup>

## A. THE LAND

The entire region of Micronesia is approximately the size of the continental United States, but its total landmass of 3,227 square kilometers<sup>3</sup> made up of over 2,100 scattered little islands, atolls, and islets is only about the size of Rhode Island. When the 200 mile exclusive economic zones are included, the Micronesian region is approximately 4,000

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<sup>2</sup>An excerpt from the opening statement by Senator S. I. Hayakawa from California, chairman of the Subcommittee on East Asian and Pacific Affairs during the Micronesian Status Negotiations held on December 10, 1982. Hearing Before The Subcommittee On East Asian And Pacific Affairs Of The Committee On Foreign Relations, United States Senate, Ninety-Seventh Congress, Second Session. (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1983), pp. 1-2.

<sup>3</sup>David Stanley, "Micronesia Handbook: Guide to the Caroline, Gilbert, Mariana, and Marshall Islands," (Chico: Moon Publications, 1992), p. 3.

nautical miles at its widest from the easternmost island of Knox Atoll in the Marshalls to the westernmost island of Tobi in the Belauan archipelago.<sup>4</sup> From north to south the area stretches almost 1,800 nautical miles from the island of Farallon De Pajaros in the Marianas to the island of Kapingamarangi Atoll in the the Federated States of Micronesia.<sup>5</sup>

### **Formation of the Islands:**

The islands of Micronesia are mostly volcanic, but of those, only a few remain active. For over 42 million years,<sup>6</sup> the islands have been formed by coral growing over the remains of aged coral on top of the volcanic mantles or plates. David Stanley, describes the islands in his "Micronesia Handbook" as follows:

Every island is different. Some are high islands with volcanic peaks, others low islands of sand and coral. All of the Marshalls and Gilberts are coral atolls or islands. In the Northern Marianas, Micronesia's only active volcanoes erupt. Nauru and Banaba are uplifted atolls. The Caroline Islands include both volcanic and coral types. Kosrae, Pohnpei, and Chuuk are high volcanic islands. Guam and Belau are exposed peaks of an undersea ridge stretching between Japan and New Guinea, volcanic in origin but partly capped with limestone. Yap is an uplifted section of the Asian continental shelf.<sup>7</sup>

## **B. THE PEOPLE**

Along with the several thousand Americans stationed or living on the islands, there are only about 365,000 people consisting of at least 45,000 Marshallese, over 100,000 FSM citizens (31,000 Pohnpeians, 8,000 Kosraeans, over 600 Mokilese, 1,000 Pingelapese, 700 Kapingamarangians, 40,000 Chuukese, 3,000 Mortlockese, and 11,000 Yapese), plus approximately 16,000 Belauans (Palauans), over 10,000 Carolinians,

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<sup>4</sup> Don A. Farrell, "History of the Northern Mariana Islands," (Saipan: Public School System, Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, 1991), p. 60.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid, p. xiv.

<sup>7</sup>Stanley, p. 3.

170,000 Guamanian Chamorros, and more than 30,000 Northern Marianas Chamorros.<sup>8</sup> These people are predominantly Christians. Along with the native Chamorros, there are also several thousand American citizen Filipinos and foreign laborers living on Guam and in the Northern Marianas. They make up the bulk of the Catholic church and their numbers continue to grow as more migrant workers and new settlers arrive.

Of all these islanders, only a few citizens of the freely associated states hold American citizenship. The natives of Guam and the CNMI are predominantly U.S. citizens. Where all the natives of Guam are considered American citizens, a few of the Northern Marianas chose to be American "nationals" rather than "citizens". Altogether, American citizens, including the U.S. armed forces personnel stationed in Micronesia, make up more than half the population in the region.

The region's growth rate of 3.4 is much higher than its death rate and the population is increasingly taking up more space than the little islands can provide. Though the population problem may be more serious in the future, many island people still feel proud to be Micronesians. Their pride has motivated them to continue to increase their numbers even against recommendations by the World Health Organization and others to curb their birth rates. Many Micronesians believe that the population problem will fix itself. They feel that they are only a small fraction of the world's population (which they are), and it is not them that will have to reduce.

These Micronesians are very happy with their close political relationships with the Americans. In some cases they have the right to live anywhere in the United States having, almost the same benefits as Americans. This has allowed them to be worry-free about their future. To many of them, it does not matter if the rest of the world sees their islands as colonies of the United States. They are only thankful for the political

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<sup>8</sup>The figures are the rounded off numbers to the nearest hundred and thousand. They are the results of computing the death and birth rates of the Micronesians based on different census reports from each of the polities. Because they are from the computations, they serve only as estimates and are not the actual numbers of people on the islands. It is also important to note that these figures represent only the number of people living on their respective islands. It is difficult to come up with the actual numbers of these different peoples because many of them now live on other islands as well as in the United States and its territories.

relationships they have with the United States, and they are confident that they can always pack up and go to the larger U.S. territories or all the way to the continental United States if something is to go wrong. They know, however, that if their relationships with the United States terminate, they will suffer drastically. As a precaution, they cannot resist diplomatic overtures with other powers of the world, especially Japan, China, and Korea.

### **1. The Origins of the Indigenous Micronesians**

Over 3,500 years ago<sup>9</sup> the Micronesian Islands were first inhabited by sea-faring "Nomads of the Wind."<sup>10</sup> These people's origin can be traced back through similarities in dialects or designs that were discovered on the pottery they carried with them on their journeys or those they made at new settlements. Some words spoken throughout Micronesia are the same as those found in Southeast Asia. And because the pottery designs resemble those found in the different regions of Southeast Asia, one can easily conclude that these people must have originated from that part of the world. Other than similarities based on physical characteristics and in some cases culture, the dialects and the pottery are the best evidence available in determining the origins of these people. They support the theory that the Micronesian natives migrated to their current home islands from Southeast Asia.

Some of these sea-faring people might have traveled down from the Asian continent through the Philippine Islands and others might have come up from the Malay peninsula through Indonesia, and maybe even through parts of Melanesia. The journeys they took were perhaps necessary in order to leave a devastated area, escape from a plague-ridden locale, or to avoid slaughter by another group of people. Perhaps they were simply adventurous people and loved to sail. Whatever their motives were, they settled on the thousands of small islands in the Micronesian region. On their journeys, "...they looked

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<sup>9</sup>Farrell, p. xiv.

<sup>10</sup>"Nomads of the Wind" is the title of a Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) special television mini-series that was aired in the California Central Coast area on November 21 and 22, 1994. The mini-series is about Pacific Island migration and is now available on video cassette tape.

to the rising sun as their destination, and to the sunset as their origin."<sup>11</sup> Because of their origins and the thousands of years of settlement on the islands, one could easily classify the Micronesians no longer as Malay or Filipino Migrants, but as Asian-Pacific Islanders, a category of ethnicity that is usually found in many college enrollment and government application forms.

## **2. East Meets West in Micronesia: The First Contacts**

For many years the Asian-Pacific Islanders did not have any contact with another group of people or with the outside world for that matter. For a long time they thought that they were the only people that ever existed. But according to Donald F. Lach's interpretation of the notes by the Spanish author Mendoza, the people from the Mariana Islands were trading with the Tartars, people he described as "merchants from either Japan, the Liu-ch'ius, or China."<sup>12</sup> Lach also mentions that Mendoza thought that the natives of the Marianas were descendants of the Tartars "for they have many similar ceremonies and customs."<sup>13</sup>

The first contacts were perhaps unintentional. The Tartars were either lost at sea and ended up landing on the already inhabited islands, or they, too, had the same intentions as the islanders when they first sailed off the Asian continent. In any case, the contacts were continued for centuries and when the first Europeans arrived on the islands in the 1500s, the natives also traded with them.

What the natives were able to haggle off the Spaniards and Portuguese, they would increase their profits by reselling them to the Tartars. These goods resold to the Tartars included silver, gold, glass, and iron, that the islanders found useless. Later, they found

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>Donald F. Lach, "Southeast Asia in the Eyes of Europe: The Sixteenth Century," (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1968), p. 644.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid. (Mendoza's 16th Century description of the Marianas indigenous people as interpreted by Lach raises questions as to whether they were related to the Tartars or not. Many anthropologists and historians still believe that the Tartars were of Mongol or Central Asian origin, and had never traveled or migrated to the Pacific Islands).



uses for the iron and began to use the "new technology" in lieu of stones to make tools for their canoe-building, hunting, fishing, and cooking. The iron then became more valuable to the natives than gold or silver, and only the latter, along with glass, continued to be sold to the Tartars.

Because of the non-existence of a Micronesian written language prior to the arrival of the Europeans, and because Micronesia's ancient period, or prehistory, is passed on mostly by word of mouth, there is very little resource material on the subject. The practice of passing legendary and ancient stories by mouth is still common today. Some of the methods that have been used include story-telling, music, and chanting during ritual dances.

Although not ancient, a method that was introduced by the Japanese and still used today, is the story-board. Other than the fact that they are only used for commercial purposes, many story-boards accurately depict the way of life during the ancient Micronesian period. Many of the local artists or sculptors grew up hearing the stories that they carve onto the story-boards.

One artist in particular by the name of Segundo L.G. Blas dilligently studied practically all the legendary stories he carves onto hard ifil wood. Mr. Blas has recently retired from his government job and now dedicates his time to teaching his love of wood-carving especially to his numerous grand and great-grand-children on the islands of Guam, Rota, and Saipan. His works are sought after by many art museums and collectors. For his dedication in using his crafts to help promote traditional awareness in Micronesia, Mr. Blas has received numerous accolades and government recognition in the forms of resolutions, certificates, and funds to continue his programs.

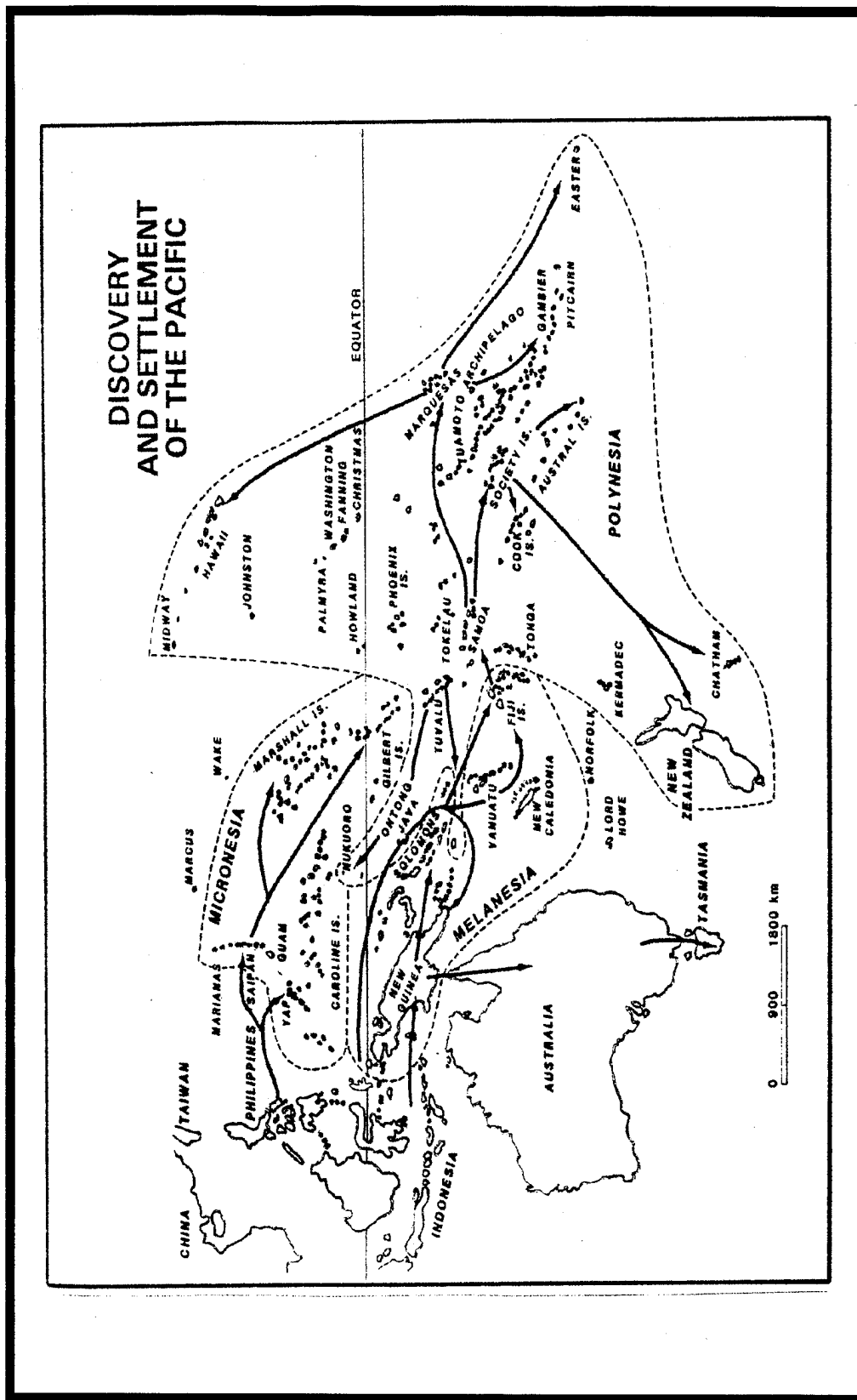


Figure 2: Discovery and Settlement of the Pacific. A theory suggests that Micronesians originated from mainland Asia through Southeast Asia. Their routes may have been those depicted above. Map Source: David Stanley, "Micronesia Handbook," 1992, p. 18.

## **C. THE MICRONESIAN DIVERSITY**

### **1. The Federated States of Micronesia (FSM)**

**"WE THE PEOPLE OF MICRONESIA, exercising our inherent sovereignty, do hereby establish this Constitution of the Federated States of Micronesia.**

**With this Constitution, we affirm our common wish to live together in peace and harmony, to preserve the heritage of the past, and to protect the promise of the future.**

**To make one nation of many islands, we respect the diversity of our cultures. Our differences enrich us. The seas bring us together, they do not separate us. Our islands sustain us, our island nation enlarges us and makes us stronger.**

**Our ancestors, who make their homes on these islands, displaced no other people. We, who remain, wish no other home than this. Having known war, we hope for peace. Having been divided, we wish unity. Having been ruled, we seek freedom.**

**Micronesia began in the days when man explored seas in rafts and canoes. The Micronesian nation is born in an age when men voyage among stars; our world itself is an island. We extend to all nations what we seek from each: peace, friendship, cooperation, and love in our common humanity. With this Constitution we, who have been the wards of other nations, become the proud guardian of our own islands, now and forever."**

**Preamble to the Constitution of the Federated States of Micronesia**

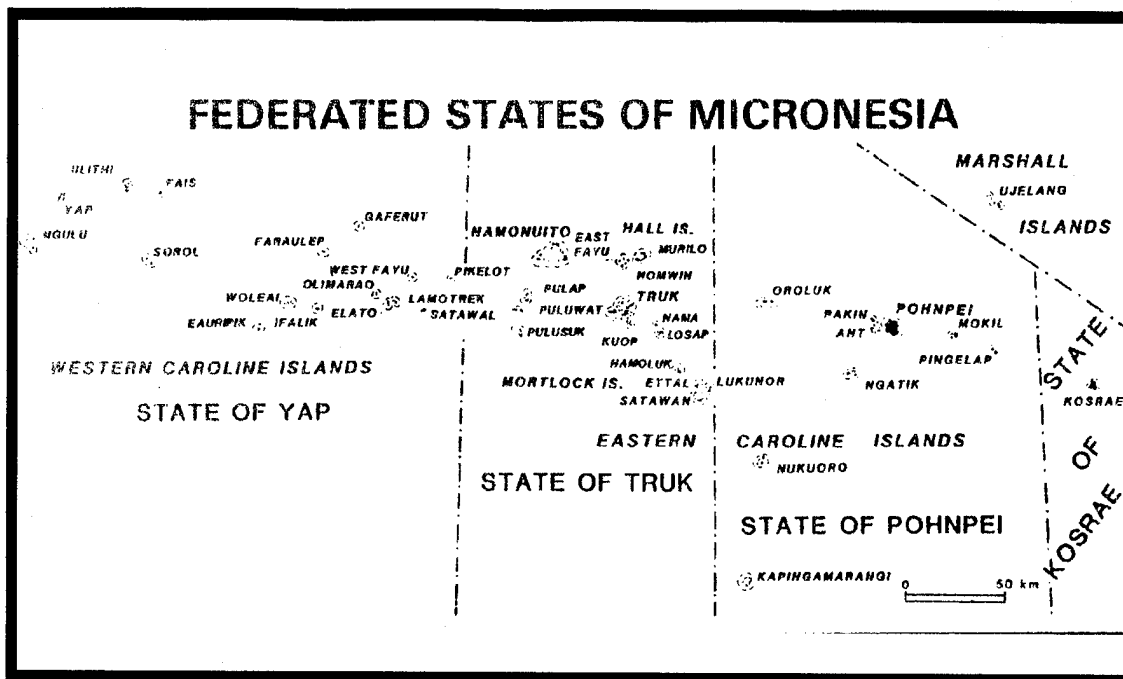


Figure 3: Federated States of Micronesia. The four members of the FSM: Yap; Chuuk; Pohnpei; and Kosrae. Source: David Stanley, "Micronesia Handbook," 1992, p. 97.

The FSM is composed of four different states, with each having its own language, culture, history, and traditions. These states are Yap, Chuuk, Kosrae, and Pohnpei, where Palikir, the nation's capital, is located. English is the official language throughout the FSM. The country uses the U.S. dollar as its currency and relies on the United States for its security.

#### a) Pohnpei

Pohnpei, formerly Ponape, is the second largest island in the Carolines with a land mass of 334 square kilometers, only 62 square kilometers smaller than the island of Babeldaop in the Belauan archipelago.<sup>14</sup> The Pohnpeian area consists of the scattered islands southwest of the Marshalls. Because of the close proximity to the Marshall Islands,

<sup>14</sup>Stanley, p. 110.

the natives of the Pohnpeian Island group are concerned about the Marshallese plans to make one of their nuclear contaminated islands a storage place for Asian nuclear wastes.

Pohnpei Island receives over 5,000 millimeters of rainfall a year, which fills its 42 streams and rivers and supplies its numerous waterfalls, ponds, and swamps making the island the wettest in all of Micronesia.<sup>15</sup> This natural supply of water has helped the fauna of the island flourish profusely, giving Pohnpei the nickname, "Garden of Micronesia." The interior of the island, a rugged, heavily forested and mountainous area where its highest point reaches up to 772 meters,<sup>16</sup> is said to have scared off invaders with its palm trees that resembled vicious giants looking out to the ocean as if forever guarding the island from foreign intruders.

A legend of "Pohnpei", or "Upon the altar," states that a group of Kosraean natives built the island with supernatural powers which enabled them to call on coral and rocks to pile up on a shallow spot in the water to make the island. But even with their supernatural strengths, the ancient Kosraean natives still had to deal with the natural power of the waves that kept destroying their little island as they built it. To go against the strength of the water, they planted mangrove trees in the ruins of their work and supernaturally built a reef around it in order to prevent the waves from hitting the altar they were creating the island on.

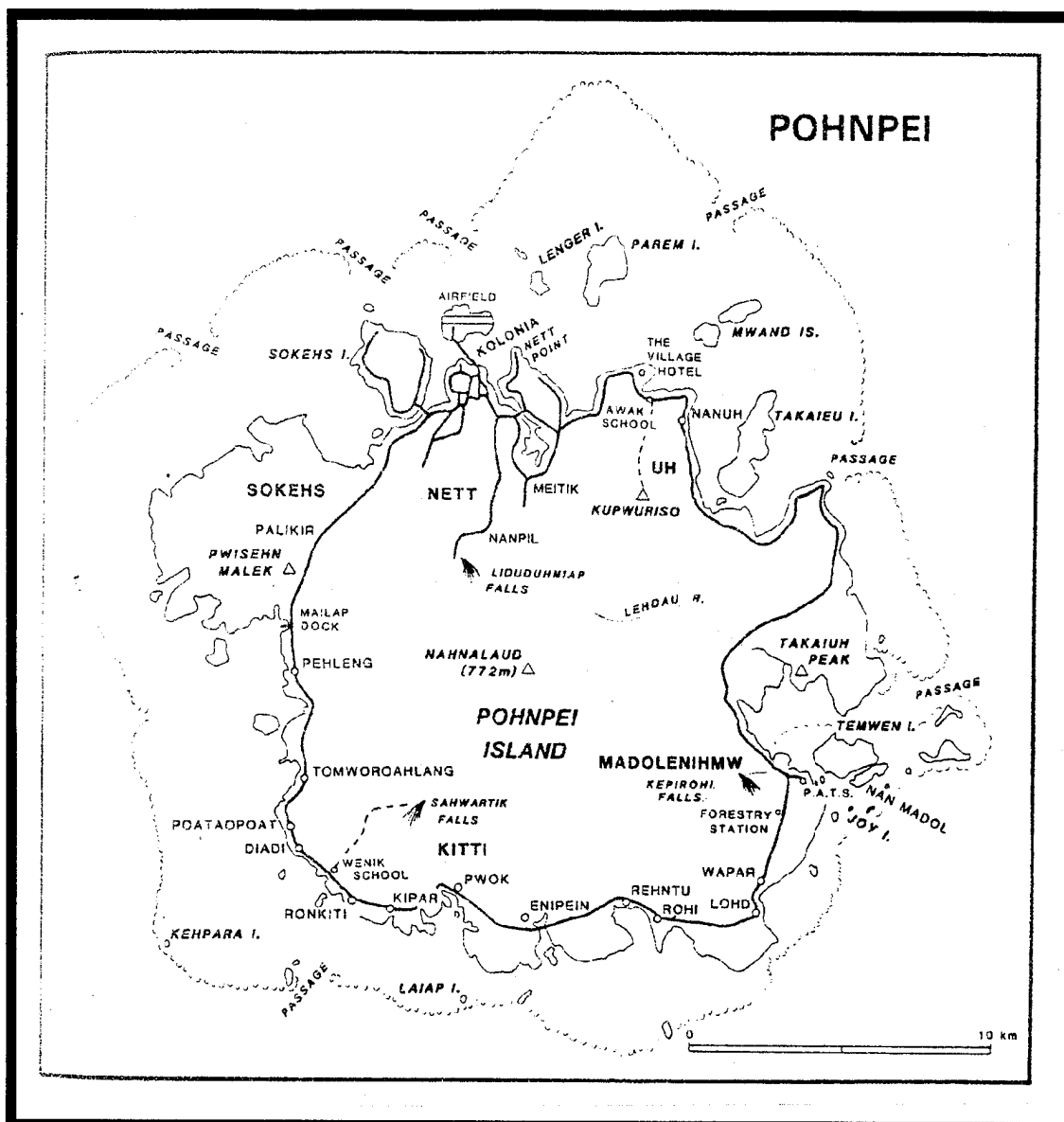
The prefix "pohn" in Pohnpei is from "upon" or "on" and "pei," originally "pehi," is Pohnpeian for "altar," thus the origin of the island's name.<sup>17</sup> And because of its serene environment and having received only few natural disasters, among several reasons, the island is also considered sacred.

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>Map of the island of Pohnpei, Defense Mapping Agency.

<sup>17</sup>The description of the legend was recorded during a conversation on January 22, 1995 with two Pohnpeian natives, Henoleen U. Santos and Herman Semes, Jr., both are now living in Monterey, California.



**Figure 4:** "Pohnpei," meaning "upon the altar," is the Federated States of Micronesia's center for administration and most commercial activities. From the sea, the island's numerous tropical palm trees look like giants standing guard and protecting the island. Many natives give credit to the trees for their role in protecting the island from potential invaders. These invaders, instead of attacking it, only bypassed the island upon noticing the "viscious-looking giants" guarding it. The island, protected by its natural barriers, is considered "sacred" because it is very fertile and that it has suffered only little disasters. These and other reasons, at one time, made the island known as "Pohnpei Sarawi," meaning "Blessed" or "Sacred Pohnpei". Map Source: David Stanley, "Micronesia Handbook," 1992, p. 113.

The Pohnpeian people are a conglomerate of Proto-Malay descent. Despite the arrival of Christianity and its mission to Christianize the natives, many Pohnpeians maintained their ties with traditional beliefs. Some of them still practice their primitive beliefs along with Catholicism and Protestantism.

Many Pohnpeians are descendants of the former colonial administrators and bear Spanish, Latin, German, Japanese, and English surnames. Among them, the popular ones include Santos, Falcom, Olter, Benjamin, Wolfhagen, Ohno, Yamada, Barbosa, Semes (from James),<sup>18</sup> Wilson, Lehbehen, and Hauley.

A large number of natives from several island groupings migrated to Pohnpei, fleeing from drought or plague, or simply searching for jobs, higher education opportunities, or a better living environment. Many of these immigrants live in their respective communities and can be found in certain parts of Pohnpei. Almost all of them now speak both Pohnpeian and English along with their native dialects. This has helped them expand their horizons on their state and world affairs. Some of them have turned out to be prominent figures on their home islands and on Pohnpei.

#### **b) Kosrae**

The island of Kosrae, like Pohnpei, is "lush and verdant, surrounded in large part by almost impenetrable barriers of mangrove forests."<sup>19</sup>

Out of all the islands under the former TTPI district of Ponape (Pohnpei), only the island of Kosrae, formerly Kusai, emerged and became a sovereign state of the FSM. Where the other states of the FSM consists of several islands and atolls, Kosrae is the only one in its own state, not counting the little ones around it and those connected to it by

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<sup>18</sup>Semes, Herman Jr., Personal Interview. Monterey, California, 22 January 1995.

<sup>19</sup>Roger William Gale, "Micronesia: A Case Study of American Foreign Policy." A Ph.D. Dissertation, (Berkeley: University of California, 1977), p. 13.

causeways. This has allowed the island to develop at a fast pace. Besides, the island has its own distinct language, can be a nation by itself, and its government does not worry about distributing its wealth to other islands.

While under the FSM and like the other states, Kosrae has been able to develop itself with its own natural resources, mostly agriculture and marine products. The state has also benefitted from the numerous aid programs it has been able to acquire.

Included in those programs are the services provided by the Civic Action Team (CAT) out of the United States Pacific Command in Hawaii. This form of assistance to the island has helped develop the embryonic facilities for a developing island economy. At their current stages, the CAT-built structures on the island are considered to be one of the best forms of assistance the United States provides to any of the individual islands in Micronesia.

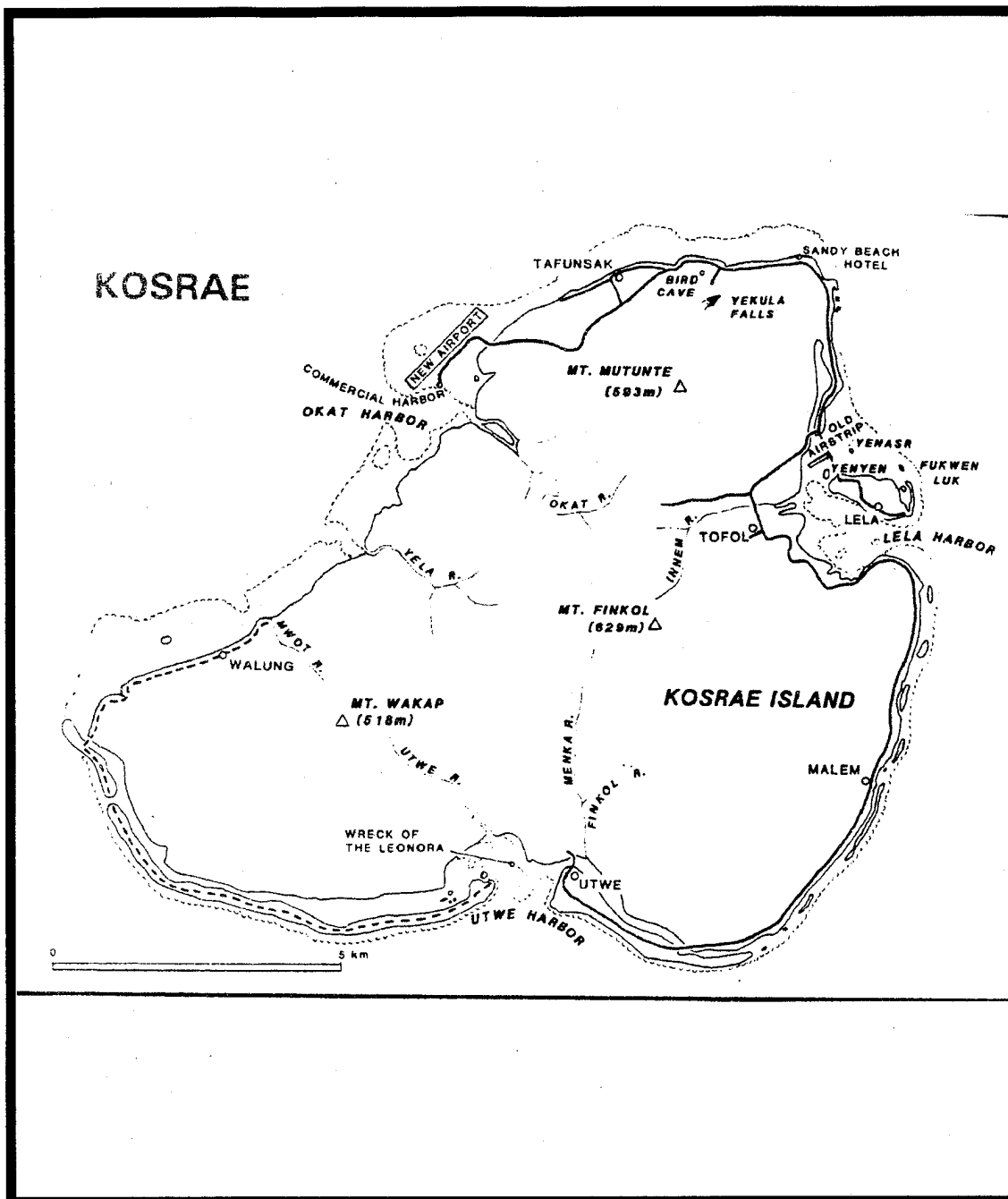
Since the arrival of Christianity, Kosrae has been considered the most religious in all of Micronesia. Church activities on Sundays last all day long and they are the major social events of the week. Traditions and customs prohibit work and cooking on that day.

Like other parts of Micronesia, Kosrae witnessed scenes of the last days of the American Civil War when Yankee whalers stationed on the island were taken prisoners by the crew of the Shenandoa on April 1, 1865. A few years later, Protestants arrived on the island and converted the few natives who survived epidemics brought by whalers and other European visitors. Western legacies, traces, and names like Bully Hayes can be found in many history books about Kosrae.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>Stanley, 1992, p. 13.





**Figure 5:** Kosrae, formerly Kusai, is the only one-island state in the FSM. Like Pohnpei Island, Kosrae is also dense and heavily forested due to the abundance of rainfall it receives annually. The island, if seen from the sea, shows the outline of a woman lying on her back. For this, the island is nicknamed by many sailors and fishermen, "The Sleeping Lady." Unfortunately, to the readers, the map above, like all the others presented so far, is obviously only a graphical representation of the island's surface as seen from above. Map Source: David Stanley, "Micronesia Handbook," 1992, p. 104.

### c) Chuuk

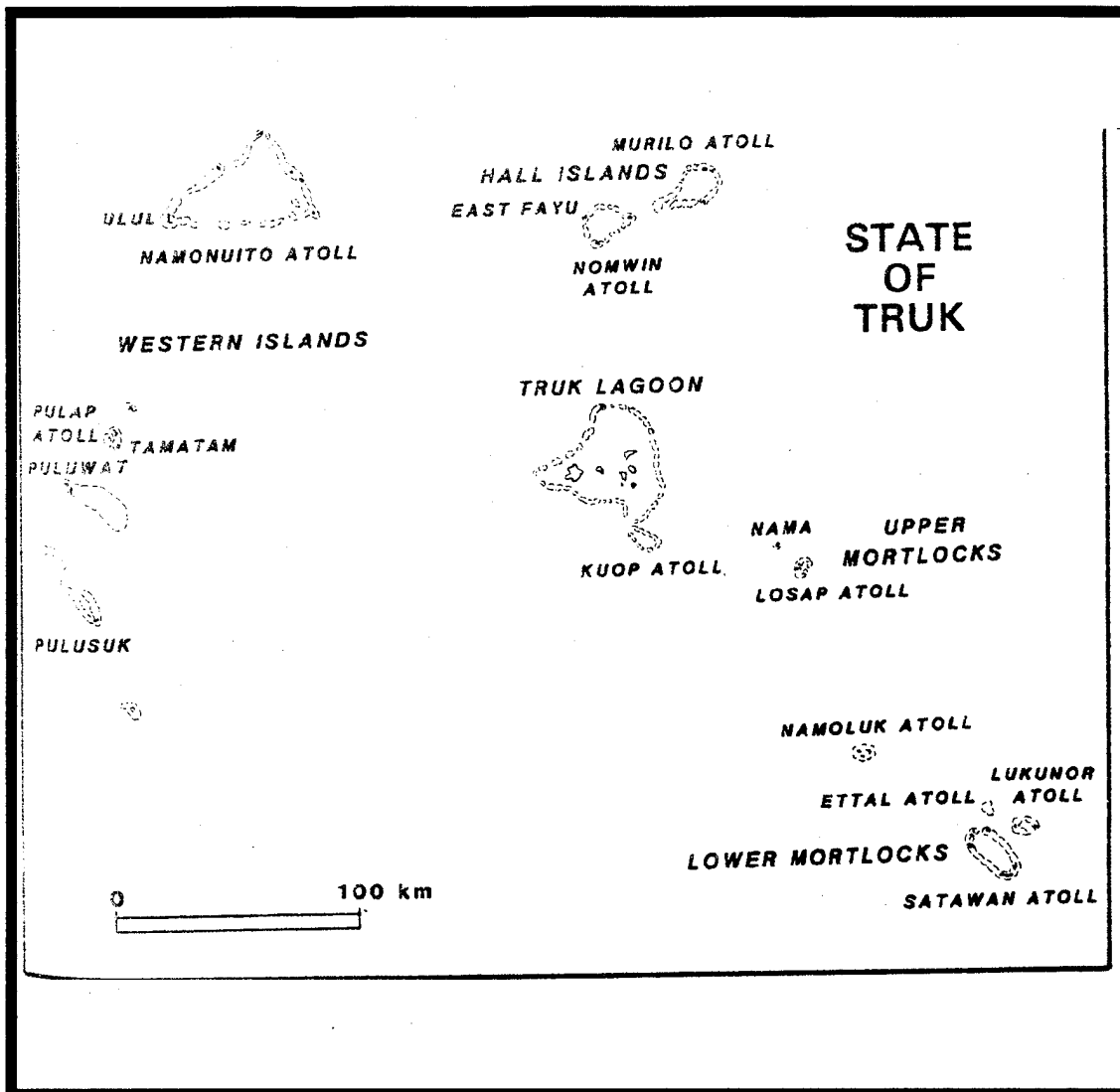
Chuuk, formerly Truk, consists of scores of islands and atolls and are mainly of volcanic and coral types. The island grouping is most famous to scuba divers for its lagoons are homes to numerous warplanes and ships, relics of World War II. Chuuk state has four other major island groups, consisting of the Lower Mortlocks, Upper Mortlocks, Western Islands, and Hall Islands. Weno Island, formerly Moen, is the administrative and commercial center of the state.

Chuuk served as a major Japanese strategic naval base for its lagoon was a natural harbor for the Japanese Pacific fleet during the war. The low and clear waters within and around the lagoon made spotting enemy submarines easy. As part of the Allied's pre-invasion scheme, during a reconnaissance mission around the lagoon conducted by American submariners, the crew members almost lost their lives when Japanese spotters dropped bombs on them before the submarine was able to disappear back into the deep.

Today, as in many parts throughout the world, the area around Chuuk has gradually been losing its strategic value even with its excellent natural harbor. The locals, however, have been turning the region into a mecca for divers and have been reaping up profits from the bottom of their lagoons. This, as well as the booming fishing and tourism industries, has increased the opportunities in the private sector in the state. The state has gradually been compensating its loss of military strategic value by the increase of its economic assets.

One of the challenges the state is encountering in its diving industry is the shortage of facilities on shore. Because of this, many of Chuuk's visiting divers end up living on the dive ships they arrived in. Currently there is a tremendous opportunity for the Chuukese government and the private sector to improve the island's on-shore facilities in order to attract more visitors and investors.

Despite the potential of economic growth on Chuuk, many of the state's citizens have left their home island in search of higher education and better job opportunities. The bulk of these Chuukese economic migrants, have gone to Guam where the University of Guam and the service industry provide the best opportunities. In the meantime, the service



**Figure 6: Chuuk State of the FSM.** Source: David Stanley, "Micronesia Handbook," 1992, p. 133.

industry back on Chuuk is slowly expanding and is waiting for the return of the local people with their newly acquired skills to fill the growing number of job vacancies.

#### d) Yap

Historically, Yap served as the German headquarters during the former colonial power's administration of Micronesia. The island had underwater cable connecting it to

Guam and some German possessions in Melanesia during that time. Fiber optic cables throughout the Pacific are gradually replacing the older cables there.

Though U.S. dollars are in use today on Yap, the Yapese up to now still value the stone money<sup>21</sup> as currency in their state. The stone money, originally from Palau and other islands are valued according to the size, weight, age, and the difficulty in acquiring them. Some prominent Yapese boast on their collection and possession of this type of "nest egg", shaped like a grind mill stone with a hole in the middle. They are proudly displayed in the front yard of their owners' houses. Because of the difficulty in moving them, some of the world's largest forms of currency, especially those with a diameter of eight feet or more, remain at their present location while the selling and buying transactions take place.

Out of all the major Micronesian Islands, Yap is believed to be the most traditional. Some of its inhabitants still live in thatched roof houses and wear the loin-cloth apparel casually. This group of people are also believed to be the most skillfull sailors, relying only on natural surroundings like waves, clouds, stars, and birds to navigate the great Pacific.

Despite its lack of development in infrastructure, the island has produced some of the most prominent leaders in Micronesia, both traditional and modern. Some of these leaders now serve as their nation's ambassadors to countries like Japan and the United States. Very few Micronesian leaders possess the background and understanding of both traditional and modern issues that affect the islands and their roles in the international arena like the Yapese politicians do.

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<sup>21</sup>A Yapese ancient stone money of about eight feet in diameter can be found in the Pacific Islands section of the Smithsonian museum in Washington, DC.

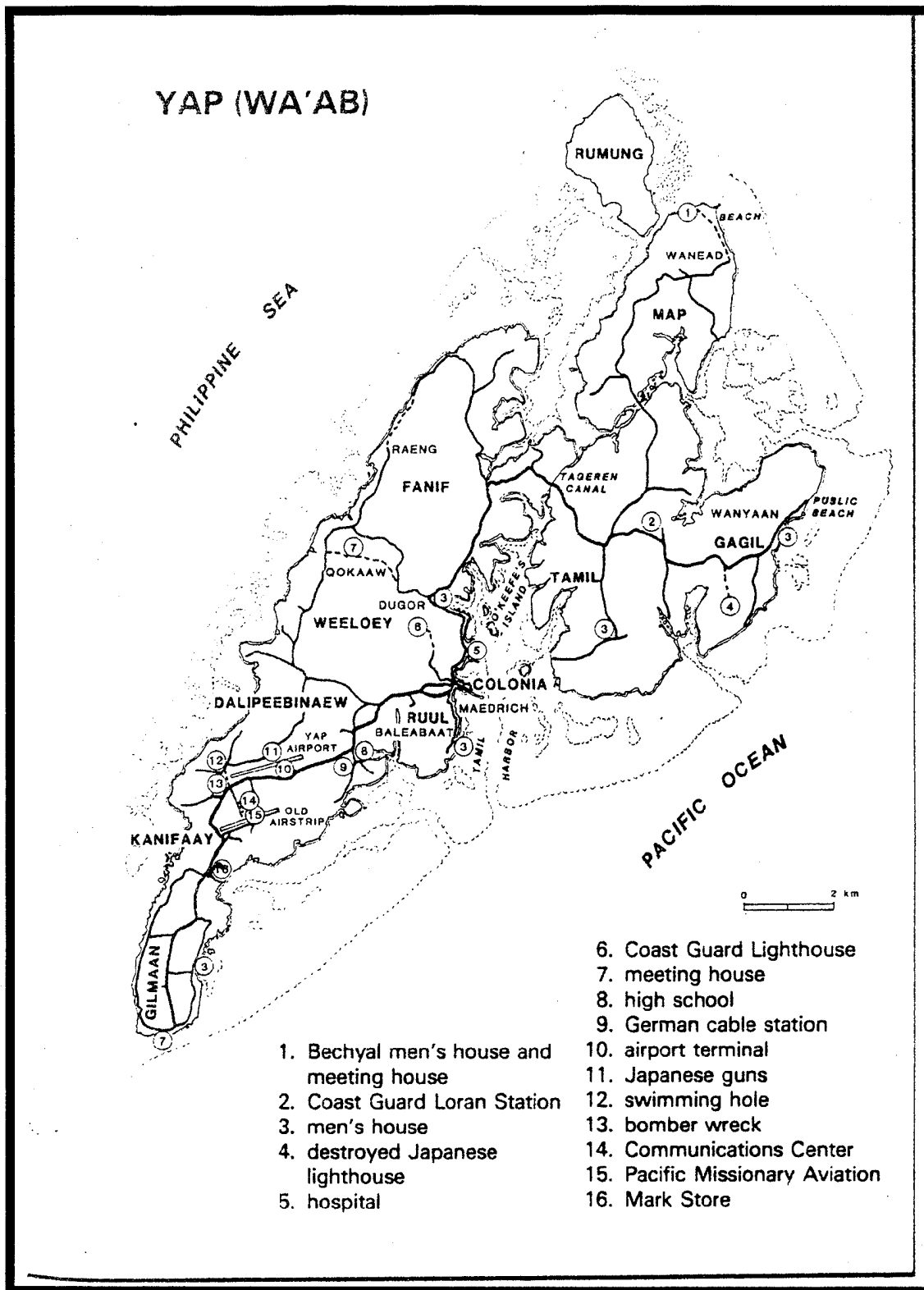


Figure 7: The main island of the state of Yap. Map Source: David Stanley, "Micronesia Handbook," 1992, p. 156.

## **2. The Republic Of The Marshall Islands (RMI)**

**WE, THE PEOPLE OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS, trusting in God, the Giver of our life, liberty, identity, and our inherent rights, do hereby exercise these rights and establish for ourselves and generations to come this Constitution, setting forth the legitimate legal framework for the governance of the Marshall Islands.**

**We have reason to be proud of our forefathers who boldly ventured across the unknown waters of the vast Pacific Ocean many centuries ago, ably responding to the constant challenges of maintaining a bare existence on these tiny islands, in their noble quest to build their own distinctive society.**

**This society has survived, and has withstood the test of time, the impact of other cultures, the devastation of war, and the high price paid for the purposes of international peace and security. All we have and are today as a people, we have received as a sacred heritage which we pledge ourselves to safeguard and maintain, valuing nothing more dearly than our rightful home on these islands.**

**With this Constitution, we affirm our desire and right to live in peace and harmony, subscribing to the principles of democracy, sharing the aspirations of all other peoples for a free and peaceful world, and striving to do all we can to assist in achieving this goal.**

**We extend to other peoples what we profoundly seek from them: peace, friendship, mutual understanding, and respect for our individual idealism and our common humanity.**

### **Preamble to the Constitution of the Marshall Islands**

**Named after the British sailor, Captain Marshall, who discovered it in 1788, this island grouping includes the world's largest atoll, Kwajalein, which bases a United States's missile tracking station. The RMI consists of almost as many islands and atolls as the FSM, but the major and famous ones are Kwajalein, Majuro, Enewetak, and Bikini. Some of these islands still bear the consequence of having been used as testing grounds for modern American weapons.**

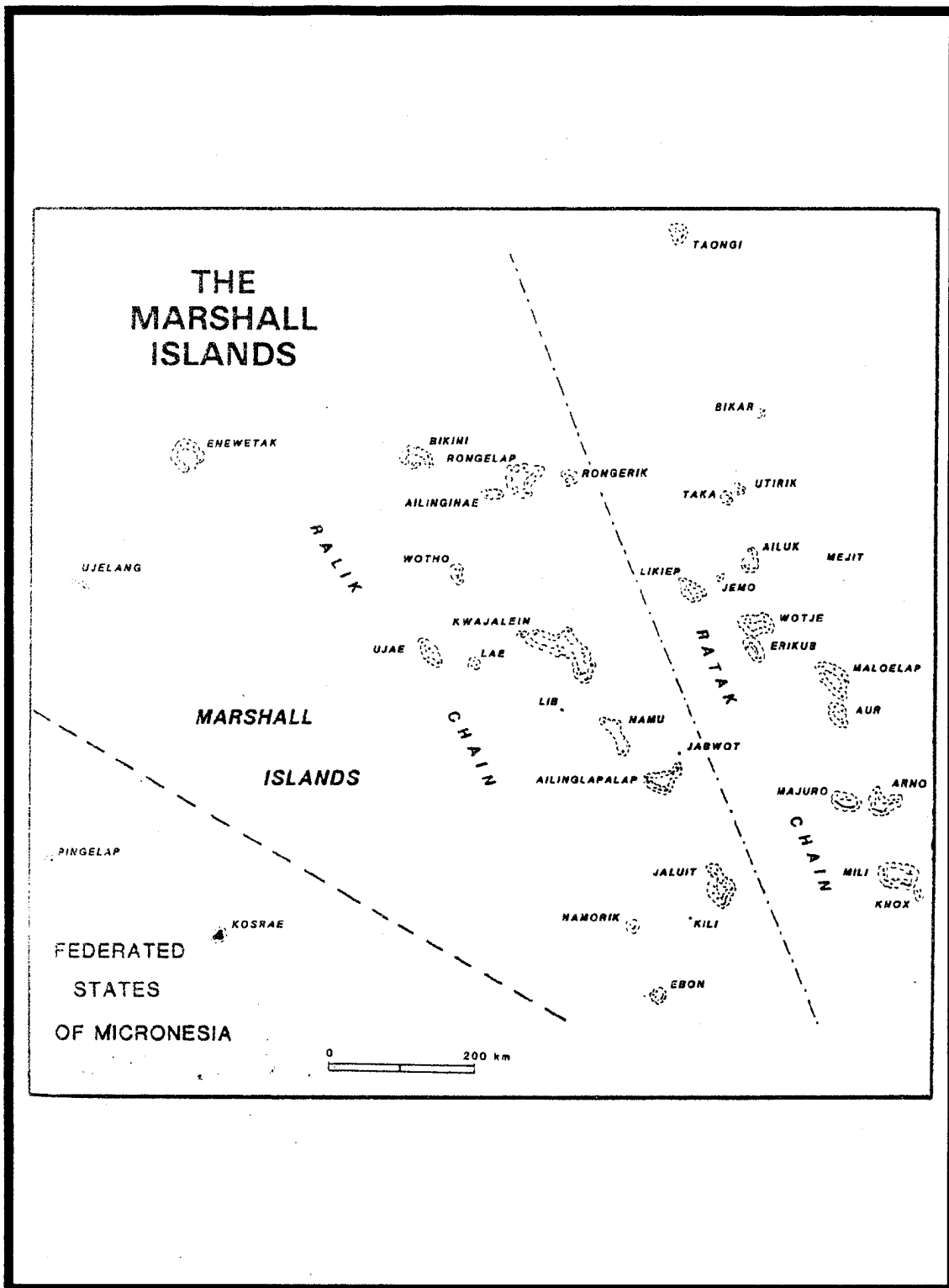


Figure 8: The Republic of the Marshall Islands, famous for its Bikini Atoll, is the eastern-most archipelago in the former TTPI, and consists of many low islands. Map Source: David Stanley, "Micronesia Handbook," 1992, p. 66.

One of the issues being debated today in the Marshalls is the possibility of storing nuclear wastes on a secluded island within the country's waters. This issue has not gained much support from Western countries or from the immediate countries around the RMI. This is not really an issue for many Marshallese because, in their view, some of their islands are already so contaminated that a nuclear waste storage or dump would not make them any worse than they are. Besides, where else in the world can these types of wastes be stored? Some of the RMI inhabitants feel that this is only another way that they can contribute to the international community, especially to the industrial countries. However, many observers of Micronesia believe that the RMI government is only doing this to make money.

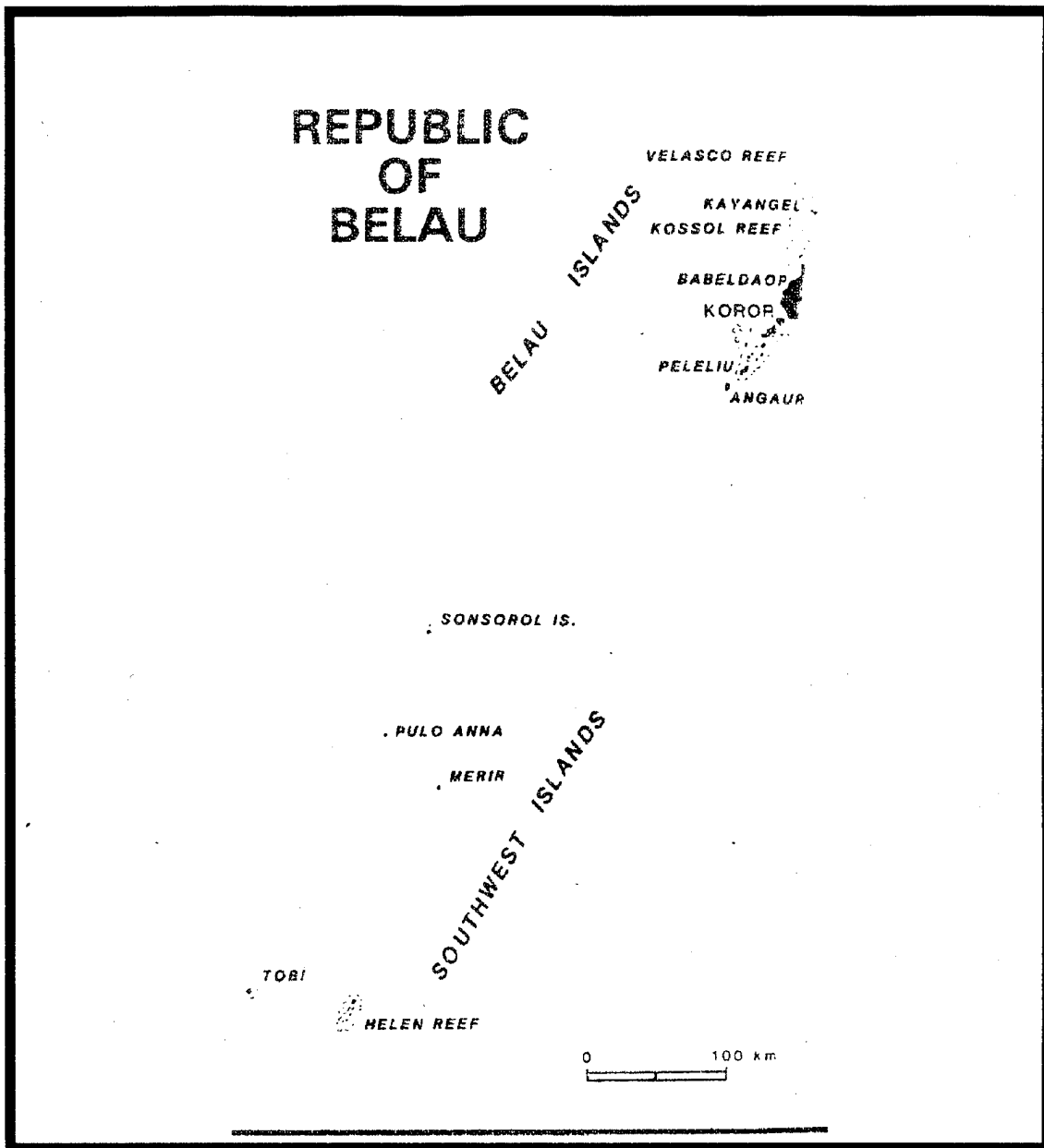
The government of the Marshalls has initiated efforts to take back from the United States its long lost island of Wake. If it continues to pursue this goal, the RMI will eventually get the island back and expand its exclusive economic zone.

### **3. The Republic of Belau (ROB)**

**In exercising our inherent sovereignty,  
We, the people of Palau  
proclaim and reaffirm our immemorial right  
to be supreme in these islands of Palau, our homeland.  
We renew our dedication  
to preserve and enhance our traditional heritage,  
our national identity and  
our respect for peace, freedom and justice for all mankind.  
In establishing this Constitution  
of the sovereign Republic of Palau,  
We venture into the future  
with full reliance on our own efforts  
and the divine guidance of Almighty God.**

**Preamble to the Constitution  
of the Republic of Belau**





**Figure 9: Republic of Belau, formerly Palau, is the western-most archipelago in Micronesia. Map Source: David Stanley, "Micronesia Handbook," 1992, p. 198.**

The islands in the Republic of Belau make up the smallest archipelago of the four in the region, and are home to one of the smallest ethnic groups of Micronesians. Despite its small size, however, the ROB is one of the fastest growing economies in Micronesia. Even before gaining its independence from the United States Trust Territory of the Pacific

Islands in the fall of 1994, the ROB has launched its program of investments and development contracts with various Asian businesses.

Its current relationship with the United States is said to be better than that of the FSM because of its strategic location and the terms agreed upon in the compact. The compact which allows the ROB and the United States to be freely associated with one another for fifty years, instead of the fifteen that the FSM and the RMI agreed on, is believed to be as binding as any American treaty in existence.

Palau was at one time considered to be the fall-back position for the American forces that left the Philippines. However, since it was cheaper to repair the facilities on Guam and other places than to build new ones, the United States dropped that option.

#### **4. The Commonwealth Of The Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI)**

**We the people  
of the  
Northern Mariana Islands,  
grateful to Almighty God  
for our freedom,  
ordain and establish  
this Constitution  
as the embodiment  
of our traditions and hopes  
for our Commonwealth  
in political union with the  
United States of America.**

**Preamble to the Constitution of the  
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands**

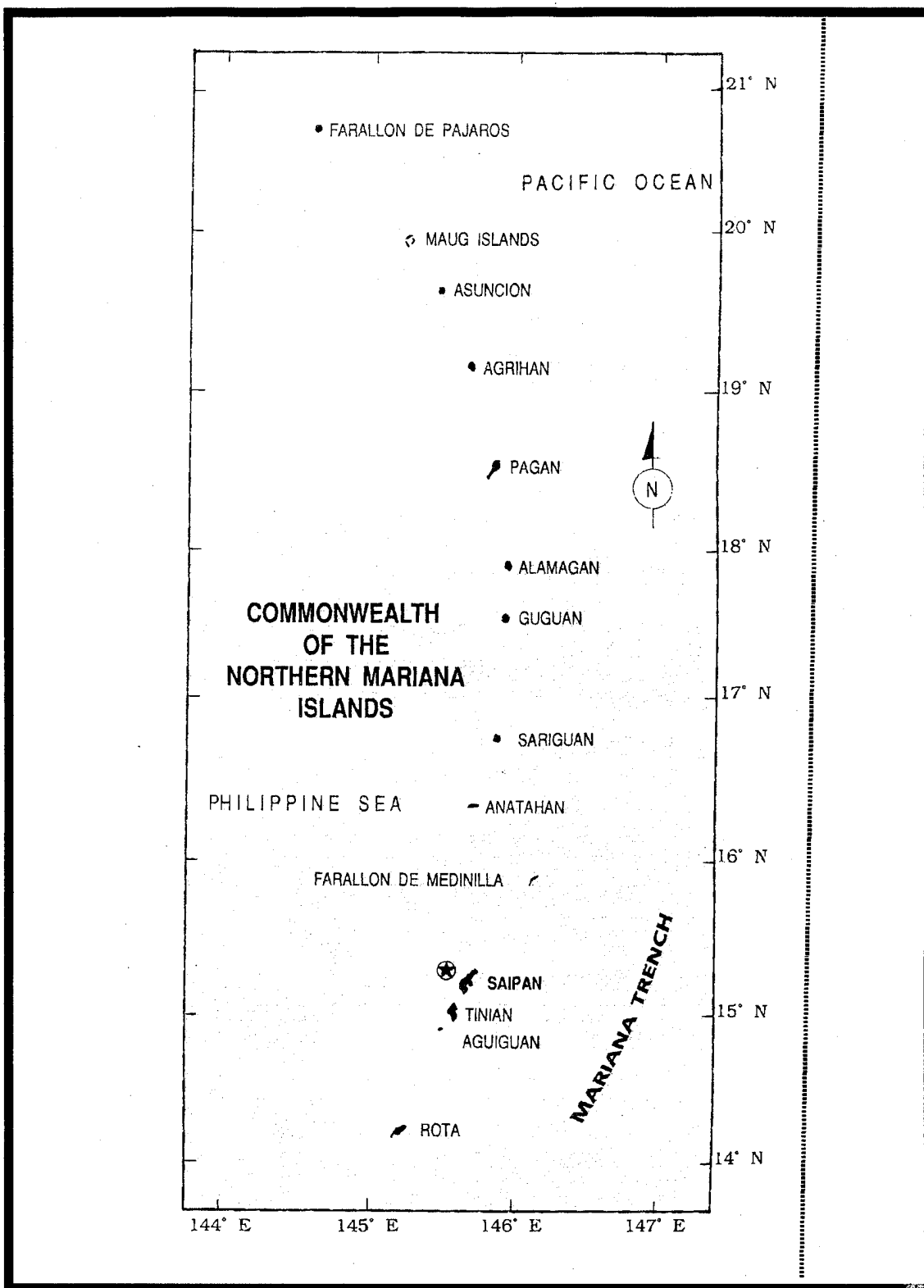


Figure 10: The CNMI. Source: Don Farrell, "History of the Northern Mariana Islands," 1991, p. 5.

The most populated island in the Northern Marianas is Saipan, followed by Rota, and then Tinian. Some of the smaller islands contain no more than one or two families.

Not counting Guam, the islands of Saipan and Tinian are where the bulk of American military strategic interests are in this region. In order for the United States "to carry out its defense responsibilities," on Tinian, there are "approximately 17,799 acres (7,203 hectares) and the waters immediately adjacent thereto" that the United States is leasing from the CNMI government. On Saipan, approximately 177 acres (72 hectares) of land at the Tanapag Harbor location is leased to the United States government for the same purpose. And on the Farallon De Mendenilla Island, approximately 206 acres (83 hectares) encompassing the entire island, and the waters immediately adjacent thereto is on lease to the United States for its Air Force and Naval bombing practices, also, "...to enable it to carry out its defense responsibilities."<sup>22</sup>

With very little detail on what the United States government plans on doing with Federal land in the CNMI, the local government is now working toward getting those areas back. The island government wants to use them to make more money locally.

## **5. Guam**

**"In recognition of the long-cherished aspiration of the people of Guam to direct the course of their own destiny, and with the belief that mutual respect, understanding, and compromise among people form a more perfect Union, the people of the United States of America, nurtured in the ideals of liberty and democracy, conscious of their obligations under the Treaty of Paris of 1899 and the Charter of the United Nations, do hereby embrace the establishment of the Commonwealth of Guam, ever mindful that the right of self-determination and the heritage of the Chamorro people of Guam shall be protected."**

### **Preamble to the Guam Commonwealth Act**

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<sup>22</sup>U.S. Public Law 94-241 (90 Stat. 263). "Covenant To Establish A Commonwealth Of The Northern Marianas Islands In Political Union With The United States Of America," Presidential Proclamation No. 4534, U.S. 94th Congress Joint Resolution No. 549.

The island of Guam is perhaps the most strategically important island in the entire Micronesian region. The facilities the island provides make this assessment correct because it is cheaper to maintain them on Guam than to build new ones on any of the other islands. Besides, the island already has most of the major necessities the United States needs to enhance its military performances in the region and in Asia. Among them are the airfields, harbors, ship repair facilities, communication assets, and the logistics or supply and maintenance assets that could provide for any contingency in the area. Besides, the island's consistently good tropical weather provides the most advantageous naval and air training environments, and the water around this American territory serves as one of the Navy's best "playgrounds".

But in this post-Cold War era with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the rise of the United States deficit, the island's strategic value appears to be declining along with the financial assistance it receives from the United States. The United States must take care. The island's indigenous people's nationalism, however, is on the rise, and the goal of its commonwealth political status appears more as a pursuit for independence from the United States, rather than for statehood or further integration with the Union. The islanders' nationalism can be attributed to fact that many Guamanians now feel that if they live on their home island, they are considered second class Americans without any representation in the American Congress. This has always been a dilemma faced by the natives of Guam and the United States as well. Guam is an island territory the United States has used only for strategic purpose. There has never been any serious American intention to make the island either a state of the American Union or completely independent.

Guam relies mostly on the revenues it generates from the military activities it hosts and its tourism industry which caters mostly to Japanese and Koreans. The local government is said to be the largest employer on the island and it is currently studying ways to cut its personnel strength and privatize some of its services in order to save money and lower its own deficit.





## **II. HISTORICAL EXPERIENCES THROUGH WORLD WAR II**

### **A. BEFORE THE COMING OF THE EUROPEANS**

Prior to 1521 A.D. and the coming of the Western world in the person of Ferdinand Magellan, the Micronesians were comparatively worry-free, and only concerned themselves mainly with family matters, surviving natural disasters, and gathering food. There were no major religions other than beliefs in animism, superstition, and the healing powers of the "suruhanus" and "suruhas"<sup>23</sup> or local medicine men and women which now only a few islanders believe in.

For more than 3,000 years prior to the arrival of Magellan, the islands were home to an estimated 80,000 inhabitants (in the Marianas alone) whose origins have been traced back linking them to Southeast as well as Northeast Asians, and even resembling those of the Tartars from Central Asia. For many years these natives concerned themselves only with basic survival needs. The natives were skillful fishermen, hunters, and sailors who could sail for long periods of time, from five hours to five months, from one island to another. During this prehistoric period in Micronesia, even with their diversity, the islanders lived comfortably under the rule of hierarchical chiefs suffering only natural disasters and small tribal wars.

#### **1. Traditional Micronesian Customs and Beliefs**

Most of the Micronesian customs and beliefs<sup>24</sup> have changed over the years. In a dynamic region where no written language existed for centuries, the changes were inevitable. The dominance by foreign powers also contributed to the alterations of the inhabitants' customs and beliefs. Only recently have historians, journalists, and

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<sup>23</sup>"Suruhanus" and "suruhas" are Chamorro words describing the Mariana Islands local medicine men and women respectively. Some refer to them as witch-doctors that can not only ward off evil spirits and cure unexplained ailments, but can also make someone ill, die, or lost at sea by performing "kakanas," or curses. The other islands in Micronesia have their own forms of suruhanus and suruhas.

<sup>24</sup>For a compilation of island traditions, myths, and superstitions, see Gene Ashby's "Some Things of Value: Micronesian Customs and Beliefs."



anthropologists began to record some of the islands' traditions, and most of these were based on the memories of the contributors. Even the following ancient stories are only recollections of the author and may differ a little from the original stories. The gist of the stories, however, are still evident. These stories are considered legends by many natives of the Micronesian Islands. Because many of them have been passed on only by word of mouth, some of these legendary stories have been altered in order to understand them better.

## **2. Ancient Micronesia: Taga and His Son; Matapang; and Sirena**

In the Mariana Islands, some of the most famous stories, folk tales, and legends, include those of "Taga and His Son," "Matapang," and "Sirena." The tales of Taga from Guam include that of himself and his son's super strength. Taga was afraid of his son's growing strength. His fear grew after witnessing his son pull up a coconut tree. Taga's son, or "Taga Junior," for the purpose of this writing, effortlessly pulled the coconut tree just so that he could get to his pet crab that went under it. Fearing for his life, Taga tried to kill him. Taga, Jr. escaped by taking a "flying leap" from the northern tip of Guam to the island of Rota in the north. His giant footprint caused by the impact from the last step he took for his leap can still be seen at a cliff edge on northern Guam.

The senior Taga remained on the island of Guam and became soft to his subjects as a result of his failed attempt to kill his physically powerful son. There is a story about one of his descendants who served as a chief several generations later; he became so soft that he even allowed his people to be Christened by Spanish missionaries, against the advice of other chiefs and island leaders at the time.

Taga, Jr. on the other hand, keeping his father's name, lived on several islands north of Guam until he finally settled on Saipan. He then lived to have his own kingdom on that island. One day the younger Taga met a man that equalled his strength. This man was Matapang and he wanted to have his own kingdom on Saipan without having to fight or kill anyone for it.

The agreement that came about between Taga and Matapang was to see who was stronger and more skillful in the traditional ways of gathering and preparing food. That strongman then would take the kingdom as his prize and rule over it.

All sorts of competition and challenges were negotiated and exhausted without producing a winner. Later, the two competitors agreed that the only way to find out who should rule over the kingdom was in a canoe-paddling competition. But, this competition would take place with only one canoe. They both would have to get in the canoe and paddle it out to the midpoint between the islands of Saipan and Tinian. Once there, they would face in opposite directions.

In that same canoe, Taga faced Saipan and Matapang faced Tinian. The object of the competition was for each to paddle in the direction that he was facing. Taga was to paddle to Saipan and if he reached the shore of the island, then he would remain chief. Matapang was to paddle to Tinian and to keep Taga from reaching Saipan. If he succeeded, then he would end up the ruler of Saipan. The loser of the competition was either to serve as a slave to the winner or sail out to the high seas in search of an island kingdom to live in or rule over for himself.

The two strongmen paddled and paddled with all their might, but the canoe did not move a foot in either direction. Finally, the canoe broke in halves. Matapang ended up on the shore of Tinian and Taga on Saipan's. The two obviously possessed equal strength. They each ended up ruling over only the island that they landed on, and from then on, they recognized and respected each other's strength and sovereignty and made no attempts to invade each other. It turned out, however, that later generations of Taga ruled also the island of Tinian, where a "Taga Beach" and the remains of an ancient "Taga" village can still be found.

The legend of Sirena is about a young maiden who so loved the sea that she would run away to go swimming and play with the fish and dolphins in the ocean. Sirena always disobeyed her mother's orders to do her chores and ignored her warnings about the dangers of the seas. Sirena always caused her mother much worry. One day Sirena's

mother became very angry at her. This anger was so strong that the mother turned it into a curse on Sirena.

The mother, realizing how much her daughter loved the water, wished for Sirena to turn into a fish so that she would never have to worry about her anymore. That same evening, while watching Sirena come home soaked from swimming all day, she told Sirena about the curse and Sirena became very frightened by it and ran away.

Sirena did not know what else to do but run back to the beach. To calm herself down, she simply and naturally did what she loved doing the most--swimming. Sirena swam all night long in the moon-lit sea. The next day, while laying face down into the sand, exhausted, and hearing her mother's call, Sirena woke to find herself half fish. From her waist down, right below the navel, Sirena's bottom half had turned into the back half of a large fish.

The legend of Sirena is believed to be the story about the original mermaid of Guam. A statue of a mermaid representing Sirena can be found in a beautifully-decorated pond in the village of Agana, the capital of Guam. This statue of Sirena is a symbol of the highly spirited women of Guam and serves as an inspiration for them.

The moral of these legendary tales is actually to arouse the imagination especially among the youth, and to allow them to become imaginative and creative in trying to understand and explain some of the world's most mysterious occurrences, particularly those that take place on the islands. Among these mysterious events include typhoons, earthquakes, tsunamis, and other natural phenomena that some islanders still find difficult to comprehend.

Curses and the practice of black magic in the islands are no longer common. However, the practice of magic and traditional ways of helping to get rid of pain, stress, and other ailments through a medicine man or woman can still be found on almost every island in Micronesia, especially on the more remote areas of the region.

On the island of Pohnpei, certain families or clans still follow the traditional beliefs in honoring certain animals, insects, reptiles, and fish. For example, a family which takes care of eels will also be taken care of by the eels in return. The eels will not bite or harm

the members of this family. And if a member of the family is in distress in the rivers, the eels will come to his rescue. The members of the eel family believe that the eels can also feel the sorrows of the family when there is a death or any tragedy in the family.

The members of the shark clan in another part of Pohnpei believe that they and the sharks around Pohnpei should respect and take care of each other instead of fear one another. Those who believe that the sharks are sacred will never be attacked by them even when fishing in shark-infested areas. Some islanders believe that these people can actually command sharks to leave good fishing spots in order for them to have a good catch for themselves.

Another example of this belief is that of the centipede. Members of the centipede family can still be found today in the village of Kittu in the southern part of Pohnpei. The centipedes are believed to be messengers from higher gods, bringing warnings and other messages. In some places of Micronesia, the centipedes are believed to be able to warn people of possible earthquakes, typhoons, as well as bring news from relatives that are far away.

These beliefs are not limited to only eels, sharks, and centipedes. There are other animals that are considered sacred. These include spiders, butterflies, and geckoes. Since the arrival of Christianity, these animals, insects, reptiles, and fish are no longer worshipped like the gods of the modern religions. The natives have accepted the modern religions and, in fact, many practice them right along with their traditional beliefs. They see the differences in the faiths as complementary instead of conflicting with each other.

There is another form of folk belief that can be found on Pohnpei. This one is the belief in ghosts. A famous one is about the ghost of "Luhk en Moali Moal." "Luhk" is Pohnpeian for a very high title in prehistoric times, but has no such translation in another language. Perhaps its closest meaning would be god, king, or almighty. "Moali Moal" means "typhoon." With only this information, one can almost translate "Luhk en Moali Moal" to mean "King or God of Typhoon(s)." The story of Luhk en Moali Moal, whose ghost is believed to be still around, started in the days after a prehistoric super-typhoon devastated the island of Pohnpei. Many people were miraculously protected and saved

from later storms of equal strength, and these survivors concluded that their protector was no other than Luhk en Moali Moal.

Luhk en Moali Moal was a husband and father who helplessly watched his wife and daughter get killed and buried by the terrible winds of a storm a long time ago. "Luhk en Moali Moal," the story goes, "saw the chopping winds cut into the ground, pick a ton of dirt up, drop it on his wife and daughter and bury them alive while they were running towards him for refuge. Before the storm killed him, too, Luhk en Moali Moal promised himself out of love for his family and anger towards the storm, that he would avenge their tragedy. However, his method of revenge was not to destroy the typhoons that would later hit the islands, but to simply ensure that what happened to him and his family would never happen again to anyone else."<sup>25</sup>

Because the ghost of Luhk en Moali Moal is believed to be the protector of the islanders, older Pohnpeians today honor him by offering him the first servings of food, drink, and other goods of value. This act of respect is also seen in the rest of the Pohnpeian customs, like the offering of the second serving of the "sakau'n Pohnpei," the local brew,<sup>26</sup> which always goes to the highest ranking individual or the person of honor in any gathering. On Pohnpei, however, no matter what title the highest ranking

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<sup>25</sup> Elpina U. Santos, (Mother of Henoleen U. Santos. Ms. Elpina U. Santos was visiting Monterey when this interview took place. It was her daughter, Henoleen who provided the valuable translation from Pohnpeian to English and vice versa, during the course of the Interview). Mearle, Angie, and Jason Timothy, Natives of Kosrae, now living on the Presidio of Monterey Annex, formerly Fort Ord, also provided some of the information on the legend of the islands. Personal Interview Notes. Monterey, June-September 1994.

<sup>26</sup> Sakau'n Pohnpei is the Pohnpeian drink made from the extraction of the potent elixir in the roots of the kava or pepper plant which used to grow wild on many parts of the island. The plant used to be rampant in many tropical places. Today many islanders cultivate the plant and commercialize the drink. The traditional way to extract the elixir is somewhat of a ceremonial event. The pounding of the roots on top of a flat granite stone creates a rhythmic musical beat similar to the sounds of the gamelans from Southeast Asia. Traditionally, extracting the elixir sometimes takes two or more persons, usually males, to pound, smash, and soften the roots. The smashed roots are then mixed and soaked in water. Now the brownish potent drink is ready to be squeezed into coconut shells serving as cups. Using the fibers of the hibiscus bark, to squeeze and filter the roots help make the drink thick and gooey which makes one feel as if he is drinking jello. The effect is a sensational numbness all over the body which makes one feel relaxed and peaceful. The latter description was the reason many people nicknamed the sakau'n Pohnpei the "peace" drink.

individual holds, he is always second to Luhk en Moali Moal. But, the younger generation of Pohnpei today appears to be swaying from this belief.

On almost every island in Micronesia, one can assume that strong love or anger that is not satisfied or settled before one's death could possibly keep spirits from going to where they are supposed to. This could probably explain the trance that is common in Micronesia in which a family member can be observed going through, acting, and speaking in the voice of a dead relative or ancestor. These trances, that only selected family members go through, are comprised of acts and speeches; they do not recall the experience afterwards, but feel tired, thirsty, and sometimes hungry, once they come out of it. The trances usually last between thirty minutes and an hour. Many Pohnpeians believe that this is only another method of communication between the dead and the living. Of course, it is always the dead person's way and at the time of his choice, for there is not one person alive on Pohnpei, unlike some places in Southeast Asia, that would voluntarily and purposely go through the experience.

One of the most baffling things about the trances, to those who wish for a more scientific explanation, is that sometimes when there is anger involved, the person going through it could become seriously ill for only a short moment before the sickness miraculously heals away. Another is the fact that the dead sometimes speak in a foreign language the person being used had never learned. Those that go through it peacefully and calmly, a method usually used by the dead to provide early warnings or bid farewells to a departing family member, always come out of it normal. The only baffling thing to them is the time lapse and the lack of explanation for their exhaustion, thirst, and hunger.

But still, many sceptics and non-believers are convinced that trances are a form of mental illness that needs further research. Their success in their researches depend on the methodology they use to study this phenomena. If they stick strictly to their conventional scientific ways, only an inaccurate and an unfair conclusion can be reached.

Other beliefs that can still be found throughout Micronesia include those of the powers of the "Taotao Monas" or "first people" whom many islanders in the Marianas believe to be still in command of the forests, oceans, and ancient village sites. These

Taotao Monas can put a curse or "kakana" on anyone they hate or love, to submit to their wishes.

Before Christianity came to the islands, the only thing that one could do to the Taotao Monas was to please them. If one desired to counter the powers of the Taotao Monas or repel the effects of the kakanas, one could become critically and unexplainably ill for a long time, or even die. The brave ones, however, would place garlic or onion in and around their houses, and especially around their sleeping areas, because they believed that the Taotao Monas could not stand the smell. Some people still believe that garlic and onion do work against the Taotao Monas' kakanas.

When Christianity was first introduced to the islands in the 16th Century, the natives began to use the Cross, the burning of blessed palm leaves, and even money in addition to the garlic and onion as repellants to the kakanas and powers of the Taotao Monas.

Up to today, out of respect, many islanders believe that if one wishes to urinate or defecate in the forests, he must first ask for permission from the Taotao Monas. One can usually sense if permission is granted if there is no unusual movement of the trees or the wind is calm. Sometimes serious illnesses are experienced by those who do not comply or respect the so-called "sacred grounds". This practice, however, is slowly disappearing, especially in the predominantly Catholic islands of Guam and the Northern Marianas.

## **B. UNDER FOUR FLAGS: SPAIN, GERMANY, JAPAN, AND UNITED STATES**

In the past, most of the islands were colonies to three imperialist powers, namely Spain, Germany, and Japan. The island of Guam experienced only two colonial rules, not counting the Japanese occupation during WW II. The Marshall Islands never experienced the Spanish colonial rule.

Guam was never administered by the Germans, and was under Japanese military rule for less than three years. The island's colonial experiences, however, first under the Spanish administration and later, the United States, had the greatest impact on the island people.

The following table provides a quick and comprehensive look at the years that each country sighted<sup>27</sup>(S), colonized (C), protected (P), or liberated (L) the groups of islands.

	SPAIN	GERMANY	JAPAN	U.S.
ESM	1529/S, 1885/C	1899/C	1914/C	1944/L
RMI	1528/S	1885/P,C	1914/C	1944/L
ROB	1543/S, 1885/C	1899/C	1914/C	1944/L
CNMI	1521/S, 1565/C	1899/C	1914/C	1944/L
GUAM	1521/S, 1565/C		1941/C	1899 and 1944/C

Dates of sighting (S), colonizing (C), protecting (P), and liberating (L) the islands by the respective powers shown.<sup>28</sup>

Where Spain is shown as the first to sight all the islands, it never colonized the Marshalls. Spain's colonization of the Carolines, however, only intensified when Germany announced its intent to colonize the Marshalls. Germany is shown as both a protector (P) and colonizer of the Marshalls because during its first years on the islands, it was only interested in protecting its copra and phosphate industries in the region. However, as shown above, the German colonial power never influenced the island of Guam at all.

The natives' traditions and life-styles in general were constantly changed by these successive colonial powers. The following is a synopsis of the history of each influential

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<sup>27</sup>"Sighted" instead of "discovered" is used by many of the islanders today simply because many of them argue that they were never lost in the first place, and that their experiences during their first contacts with the Western world were not always pleasant. Their celebrations of their "Discovery Days" now portray the most negative images of their islands' first visitors. Some of the reenactments performed today depict the controversial "rape, pillage, and burn" scenes that, to the survivors, are arguably not worth celebrating.

<sup>28</sup>For exact dates of events, any book on the history of each island would more than likely carry the data. One excellent book available and easily accessible is David Stanley's "Micronesia Handbook." In it, Stanley shows most of the dates of major events that took place throughout the islands.



power that touched the lives of many Micronesians, followed by the United States administration that officially began in 1899 for Guam, and 1947 for the rest of Micronesia under the TTPI.

### **1. Spain:**

On March 6, 1521,<sup>29</sup> Ferdinand Magellan, the Portuguese sailor, hired by the Spanish government, arrived in the Mariana Islands while enroute to the Far East in search of spice and other riches, while at the same time trying to prove that the earth was round. Magellan was only in the Marianas for three days<sup>30</sup> before he sailed off towards the Philippines where he was killed by a Filipino tribe. During his brief stay in the Marianas, Magellan named the archipelago "Islas de los Ladrones," or Islands of the Thieves. His descriptions of these islands and people reflected his unfortunate experiences.

On these islands, at the time of Magellan's arrival, the natives would only settle for what they believed was fair trade. To them, the metal and iron on the visitors' ships were all they wanted as repayment for their hospitality and for saving the sailors from starvation. When the natives felt that Magellan was ready to sail off without honoring their desires, the natives peacefully helped themselves with the captain's skiff, the iron, and other metals they could find on the ships, even the nails that held the vessels together. These metals were used for tools, spears, and cooking utensils.

The natural reaction of Magellan and his crew members was to fight to get their skiff and metals back. This reaction resulted in many natives dead, and the first impression of the islands' visitors became inbedded in the minds of the natives.

Months and even years later, sailors took the same route that Magellan and his men did in search of the Asian treasures of gold, silver, and spice, and to experience the adventures of their predecessors. While many of these sailors only stopped on the islands to trade and replenish themselves with fresh water and food before they continued on with

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<sup>29</sup>Farrell, p. 121.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

their journeys, some of them were brutal to the natives, kidnapping and raping the women, killing the men, and burning the thatched houses of the islanders.

Those natives that survived the pillages were later torn on how to treat those sailors they rescued from capsized ships. They were not sure whether to care for these drifters or punish them for what their comrades had done earlier to their families, friends, and houses. They eventually discovered that it was more profitable to care for these sailors and trade them back to their own people for valued goods like iron.

It took years from the initial sightings of the islands to the actual arrival of the Spanish colonists who settled on them and Christianized the natives. Spain ruled Micronesia as the first foreign power in the region from the early days of the 17th Century up to 1898 when the United States seized the island of Guam,<sup>31</sup> and 1899 when Germany bought the rest. Some historical records, however, conclude that the Spanish era on Guam was from 1521 to 1898, and from 1521 to 1899 for the Northern Marianas. For the other Micronesian islands west of the Marshalls, the Spanish era covered the period from 1595 to 1899. The Spaniards never settled on or ruled over the Marshall Islands.

During the Spanish administration, the Spaniards sometimes used force to remove indigenous practices, including the hierarchical chiefdom system of local rule, especially on the larger islands. Many of the natives' customs, cultures, and traditional skills disappeared during the three centuries of Spanish rule. The natives that hid from the Spaniards on the most remote islands kept their ways of life and passed them on to their descendants via ceremonial dances, chants, tales, and other methods in the absence of a written language.

Under the Spanish administration of almost 300 years, the indigenous people of Micronesia were almost decimated as a result of the rebellions, newly introduced diseases, and inter-marriages that led to the almost complete Hispanicization of the Micronesians. But, on a positive note, the natives received an introduction to the modern European lifestyle and a new form of religion. The Spaniards brought with them their Christian faith

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<sup>31</sup>The Spanish government sold the rest of Micronesia to the Germans a year later.

as part of their missionary duties to "spread the good word" and civilize the savages, or moros, of the newly discovered land. Modern technology, in the form of iron, was also introduced. Clothing was enforced in the newly Christianized region of the world. New techniques to prepare food were also introduced by the Spaniards. The market economy flourished when other Europeans exploited the marine resources of the Pacific, mostly whale oil. But the most fascinating thing that the Spaniards brought to the islands was their form of government.

The combination of church and military rule was enforced by the Spanish administration, but recognized and respected only by very few natives. The ones who failed to comply with the orders from either the church or the governing authorities were eventually suppressed and coerced into compliance. The more stubborn ones were simply killed when captured. To some of the natives, however, it did not matter who or what was in control of them as long as they were able to live happily with the basic essentials of life, namely food, shelter, and leisure.

During the Spanish era, it was obvious that where the cross went, the sword followed.<sup>32</sup> But, some argue that it was the other way around. Word of mouth passed on from generation to generation, says that the Micronesians were first subdued and then Christianized. Either way, each island group was administered differently. Some were under civilian control while others required military force to maintain order. Of course, the type of administration depended on whether the natives complied with or resisted the orders of those in charge.

In the three centuries that the Spaniards and a small number of other Europeans were on the islands, thousands of natives died from new diseases as well as from rebellions against the Spanish Conquistadors. Many Micronesian fishing boats that sailed the great Pacific were used by the Spanish galleons and warships as cannon targets out in the open seas. As a result, to avoid being "shot out of the water", a great part of the traditional sailing skills disappeared. Communicating and maintaining links with the neighboring

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<sup>32</sup>Farrell, p. 243.

islanders ceased. Traditional cultures were altered, and most importantly, more than 75 percent of the islands' population vanished.<sup>33</sup>

The Spaniards brought with them workers from the Philippines and Mexico to assist in controlling the natives. Many of these workers decided to live in Micronesia even after the Spanish administration ended. Their legacies are still obvious in the forms of physical appearances and surnames, especially in the Mariana Islands.

At the end of the 19th Century, the natives felt freer to live their traditional lifestyle in the open when the ruling authorities were losing control over them. This was due to the weakening Spanish rule which resulted from their defeat in the Philippines against the Filipino moros and the coming Spanish-American War.

After the Spanish-American War, Germany acquired title to all of Micronesia except Guam. The Germans lost that title to the Japanese at the end of World War I.

## **2. Germany:**

The German era in Micronesia actually began prior to the Spanish-American War when the Germans got word that phosphate was abundant in the area. The German's were the first to claim the Marshall Islands and, little by little, purchased the other Spanish islands in the Carolines, adding them to its other possessions in Micronesia and Melanesia. The German period from 1885 to 1914 was short compared to the Spanish era. The Germans were also more lenient than the Spaniards towards the natives. On some islands where the natives were already civilized, or Hispanicized for that matter, only merchants, doctors, dentists, and priests were in control. The leniency of the Germans was evident mainly in the Marianas. But just as in the Spanish administration, where there was indigenous resistance, naturally a small contingency force would be used to control the natives.

On the island of Pohnpei for example, the natives' rebellion against the Germans over a road construction project resulted in many deaths, including the German mayor of

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<sup>33</sup>Ibid., p. 177.

the island.<sup>34</sup> The situation was later settled by isolating the culprits and denying them access to food, weapons, and ammunition. Eventually all the natives involved in the massacre were punished for their part in it.

During this era, there were still some remnant Spaniards who would not leave the islands because they had already established homes and families there. Besides, the Germans felt that they could use the Spaniards' linguistic abilities and cultural understanding of the natives in order to better communicate with and control them.

As early as 1893, during the Spanish era, there were already some Japanese living on the islands and by the time the Germans took control, the Japanese had already established successful trading and shipping companies. Admiring the success of these businesses, the Germans allowed these Japanese to stay and continue their operations.<sup>35</sup>

In the first year of World War I, Japan invaded Micronesia without firing a shot. The Germans did not resist, and the transition of the control over the islands went almost as smooth as when the Germans bought the islands from the Spaniards.<sup>36</sup>

### **3. Japan:**

The Japanese administration of the islands was both dominant and productive. It was dominant to the point that the natives were sometimes treated like slaves on their own land, but productive because the Japanese shared their agricultural and technological expertise with the natives. The Japanese government, as viewed by many, was an extractive as well as an occupying or settling empire which "Japanized" practically everything in Micronesia.

The impact of the Japanization process was felt politically, economically, socially, and even genetically. The dominant political influence was loathed by the natives.

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<sup>34</sup>Mike Malone, ed. "Come to Micronesia: 1st Comprehensive Travel Guide," (Pacifica Publishing Co.: 1988), p. 34.

<sup>35</sup>Farrell, p. 297.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., p. 287.

Besides brutal treatment, the natives were also forced to bow towards Japan in the north as a sign of respect to the Emperor there. This was an act contradictory to the natives' already devout Christian values which forbade honoring another god.

The economic influence, however, boosted the natives' desires for an expanded market economy. With the reintroduction of trade and a market economy, the natives were again becoming the skillful traders that they were before the arrival of the Europeans. The natives used this opportunity not only to develop their islands with the help of the Japanese, but also to learn more of the technological skills that the Japanese brought with them. To them, it seemed, it did not matter that the Japanese were shipping all of the goods produced on the islands to Japan as long as they were able to live a peaceful, quiet, and prosperous life. It turned out, however, that this was not the case at all.

Most of the natives were being mistreated by the Japanese officials. Many of them were treated like slaves. Those that received wages for their work were only getting the very minimum to supplement living on subsistence farming. The Japanization of the indigenous populations of Micronesia was almost a form of eugenics.

In only three decades, the Japanese almost made the indigenous people and their culture become even more extinct than what the Spaniards did in three centuries. The Japanese men could marry native women and raise a family with Japanese values, but "the native men could not even look at Japanese women without getting tortured or punished somehow."<sup>37</sup>

During this era, many other Asians were settling in the islands. These settlers, mostly Koreans and Okinawans<sup>38</sup> were laborers being exploited by the Japanese Empire. Each ethnic group still has descendants living in Micronesia.

The transition of control over the Micronesian Islands from the Japanese to the Americans could easily be made a distinct chapter in history. American control of

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<sup>37</sup>Henoleen U. Santos, (A Pohnpeian native). Personal Interview Notes. Monterey: January 16, 1994.

<sup>38</sup>Farrell, p. 295.

Micronesia came as a result of the defeat of the Japanese in the bloody battles of the Pacific during the Second World War.

#### **4. United States:**

The United States first arrived in Micronesia towards the end of the Spanish-American War during which it captured the island of Guam in 1898. Almost a year later, the United States declared Guam its possession as a "war booty" or prize for its victory against Spain. Guam was as an "unincorporated, unorganized territory" of the United States, meaning that the island will never become a state of the American Union. There was no other American territory within the Micronesian region until the end of World War II.

Not wanting to provoke the Japanese, the U.S. Naval administration on Guam did not fortify the island or prepare it for a possible invasion, even with the knowledge that Japan was preparing the islands around Guam for war. Because of the failure to take action to upgrade the defense posture of Guam, the United States armed forces there suffered drastically during the Japanese invasion of the island.

### **C. MICRONESIA IN WORLD WAR II**

Around Guam, the three decades of Japanese administration on the islands resulted in mixed feelings among the natives. During this imperial power's administration, there were some natives who believed that the Japanese were really taking care of them, and there were those who saw the Japanese as just another foreign power that was there only to extract the resources of the islands. The end of the Japanese administration came when American marines, soldiers, and sailors bloodily liberated the islands from the Japanese imperial army.

World War II in the Pacific is a whole chapter in history that included some of the fiercest and most famous battles in the Micronesian area. From the beginning of the Japanese administration of the Micronesian islands in 1914 to its end in 1944, the Japanese military prepared the islands to serve as "stepping stones" to Pearl Harbor and other sites.

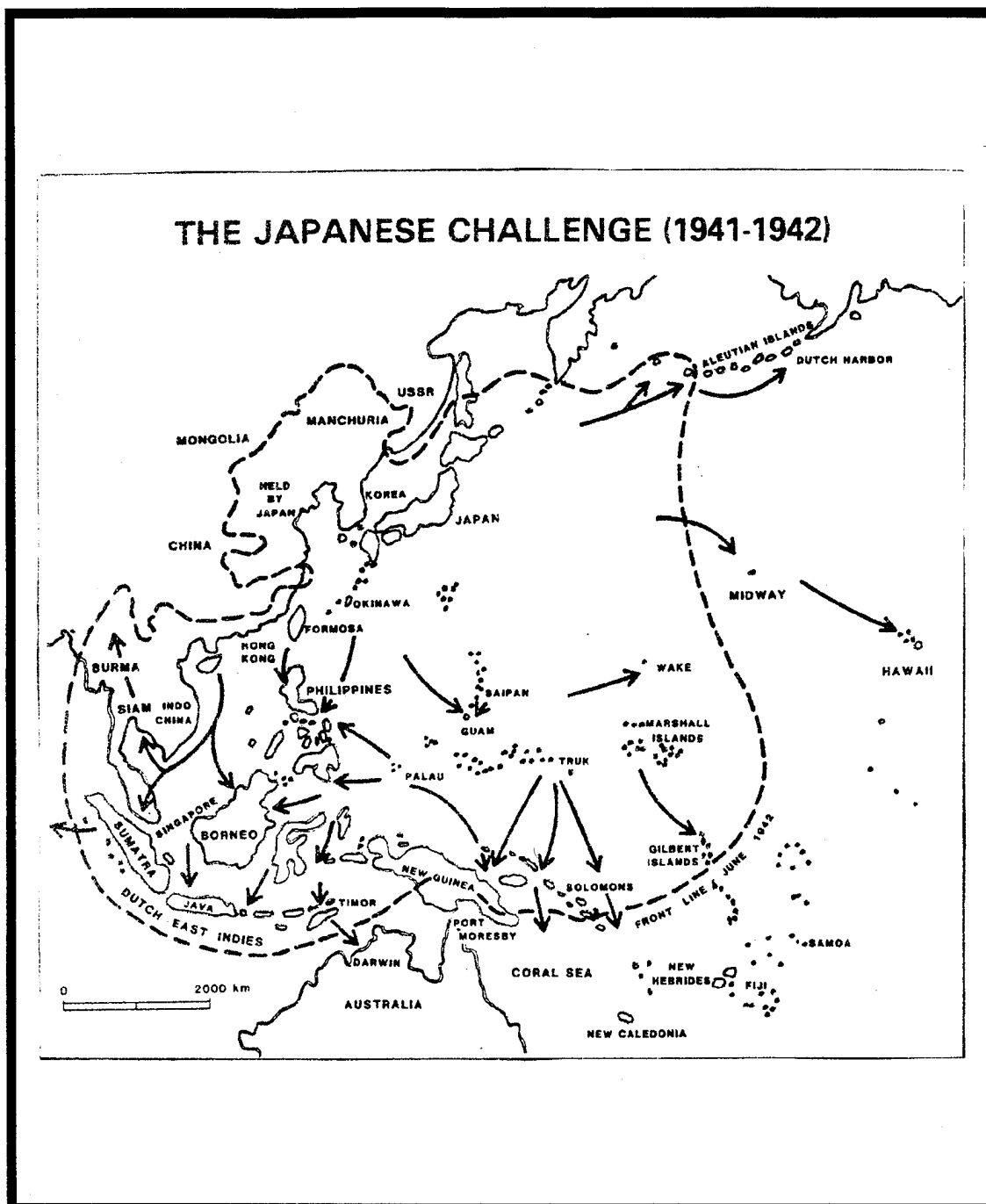


Figure 12: The Japanese expansion involved the use of military occupation forces and attacks toward fulfillment of its quest: a "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere," which is a concept sometimes likened to the American Manifest Destiny. Some of the attacks, as depicted by the arrows, were only used to either neutralize or harrass Allied forces that the Japanese thought might hinder their operations toward their goal. The broken line outlines the area that the Japanese controlled. Map Source: David Stanley, "Micronesia Handbook," 1992, p. 20.



## **To Japan by Way of the Islands**

**"There is only one sensible way to think of the Pacific Ocean today.  
It is the highway between Asia and America...."**

**James Michener, "Return To Paradise"**

Applying Michener's description of the Pacific Ocean to get to Japan is really a reversal of what the Japanese did to get to the Hawaiian Islands when they attacked Pearl Harbor. In this way, the United States during the latter part of World War II, also used the Micronesian Islands as "stepping stones" to get to the Japanese main islands during its efforts to "set the rising sun."

Some of the famous battles in the region included the capture of the Truk lagoon, the battle of Peleliu in the Palauan Islands, the battles of Saipan and Tinian, and later the retaking of Guam. The islands of Saipan and Tinian later served as the launch points for air strikes on Japanese cities and strongholds. Tinian, later in 1945 was the launching point for the controversial Enola Gay's mission to drop the atomic bombs on Japan which helped end the war in the Pacific.

### **D. AMERICAN LIBERATION**

In 1944, the United States invaded the islands of Kwajalein, Enewetak, Saipan, Tinian, Guam, Peleliu, Angaur, and other Micronesian islands taking them away from the Japanese imperial army and naval forces. American marines, soldiers, and sailors bloodily liberated the islands from the Japanese forces that had occupied them for almost three decades.

The first landings took place in February, 1944 on two islands in the Marshalls. After some bloody battles with Japanese land forces, the Americans captured the islands of Kwajalein and Enewetak. Where the number of casualties would have been too high, those islands that were fortified and thought to be the enemy's strongholds were pounded

with naval artillery and air strikes, bombed, neutralized, and then by-passed after cutting off their supply lines and assets. The bombardments on Truk lagoon was almost the American revenge for the Japanese Pearl Harbor attack, but at a very small scale. In June and July of the same year, the bloodiest of battles in Micronesia were seen during the American liberation of the Mariana Islands. The necessity to take the islands of Saipan, Tinian, and Guam was based on the strategy to use them as "stepping stones" to bomb the main Japanese islands. In the Fall of 1944, the island of Peleliu was captured to serve as the launch point for the battles to follow in the Philippines.

Many native survivors of the war questioned the intent of the Americans when they captured the islands from the Japanese. They were curious whether the United States actually came to rescue them from the Japanese, or whether it only wanted the strategic advantages the islands offered. Some of these people wondered if the United States even knew of their existence prior to the invasions. Many of the war survivors have already passed away without their curiosities satisfied. And the ones still alive, will probably never know, either.

Nevertheless, the arrival of the Americans was a blessing to most Micronesians, but especially to the natives of Guam. The sight of American warships appearing on the horizons around the islands, came as some natives' answer to their prayers for freedom. The Guamanians were already American nationals at the time the Japanese captured the islands in December, 1941.

The island of Guam became a part of the Japanese Empire only during the Second World War. A few years after the war the Guamanians became American citizens as a result of the 1950 Organic Act of Guam which along with United States citizenship, granted the natives more control over their insular affairs.

During the latter part of 1944 and all of 1945, the entire Micronesian Islands were under the United States Naval Administration. Later on, the Navy and the Interior Departments alternated on administering the islands until Guam gained its self-governance, and the other islands began pursuing for similar control over their respective insular affairs.

The rest of Micronesia on the other hand was looked upon as a burden for both the Department of State and the Department of the Interior. The Department of the Navy, however, did not seem to have any problem with its desire to annex all of the Micronesian Islands. After all, limitless American blood spilled on these islands during the invasions to capture them from the Japanese and by every sense of the word, they were American "war booties." In the minds of those in the Department of the Navy, the islands belonged to the United States, but to many others, the islands had to be set free.

The officials in the Interior and State Departments debated over the consequences of holding onto the islands. Many of them believed that developing the war-torn islands would burden the United States. Others believed that to annex the islands was contrary to the fundamental reason to fighting the war in the first place. The United States, along with the rest of the Western Powers, fought the Axis Powers principally to terminate imperialism. To annex the islands would only make the Americans appear like the imperialists they had just fought against.

Contrary to the desires of Navy Department officials, the State and Interior Departments officials finally agreed that they would do as much as possible to assist the natives in their efforts to become self-governing and develop the islands toward independence. In the end, however, the Navy Department was forced to settle for military access rights to the most strategically important islands in the archipelago.

To these ends, the United States pushed through the United Nations Trusteeship Council an agreement which provided that the Micronesian Islands, excluding Guam, Nauru, and the Gilberts and Ellis Islands, should constitute an entity to be known as the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (TTPI).

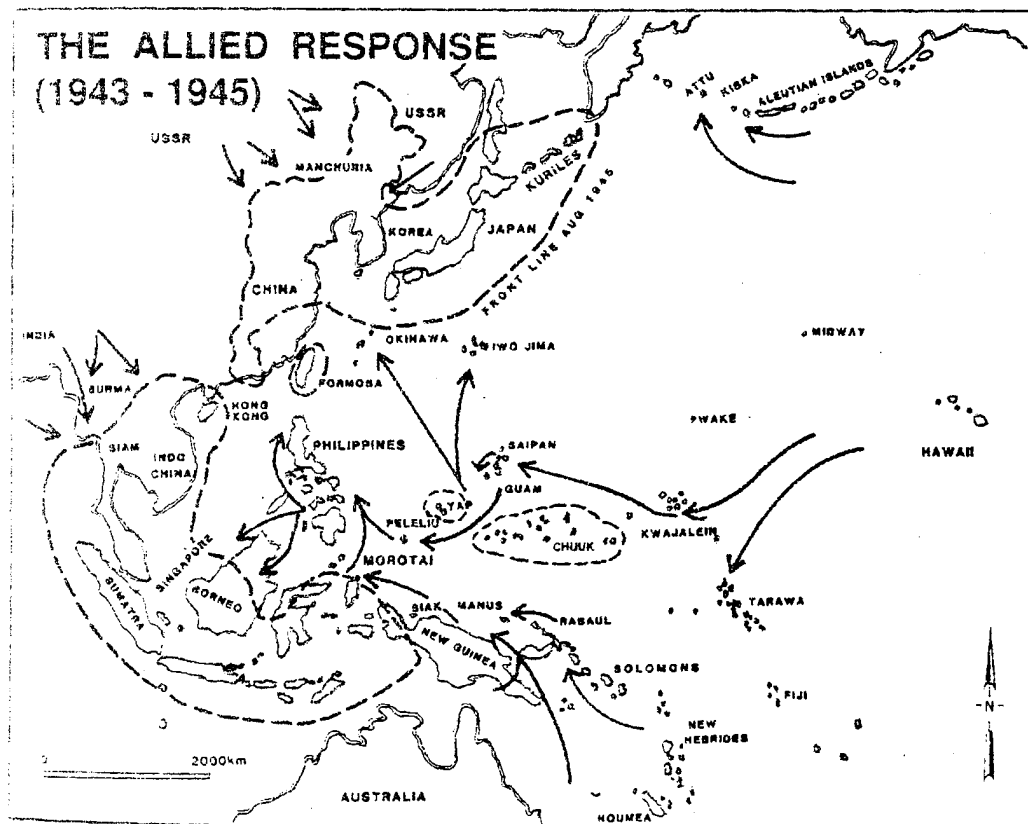


Figure 13: The Allied maneuvers countering Japanese occupation forces in what was to be known the region within the "East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere." Map Source: David Stanley, "Micronesia Handbook," 1992, p. 21.



### **III. TO THE END OF THE COLD WAR**

#### **A. CREATION OF THE TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS**

**"There are only 90,000 people out there. Who gives a damn?"**

Former U.S. National Security Adviser and  
Secretary of State, **Henry Kissinger**

In 1945, the victors of the Second World War, in order to maintain the peace they had just won, revived the old concept of international organization known as the League of Nations, only this time it was to be known as the United Nations. The United Nations also had several different agenda, for the new post-war era. This included the establishment of a Security Council with only the five allied powers holding permanent membership and veto power. The decisions of the United Nations Security Council were the determining factors leading to the maintenance of world peace, freedom, and progress. It was in this body, specifically the Trusteeship Council of the United Nations that, along with the United States, created and monitored the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands while the islands were under the administration of the United States Government.

In addition to Guam and American Samoa which have been American strategic outposts since 1899, the Department of the Navy after WW II, picked Tinian, Saipan, Kwajalein, Majuro, Eniwetok, Bikini, Koror, Peleliu, and Wake, as major strategic islands that could best serve the United States in its weapons testing and in its strategy to contain Japan and prevent that country from remilitarizing. A few years later, the islands also served as strategic outposts during the enforcement of the United States' policy to "contain" the Soviet Union at the time.

##### **1. Micronesia as a Strategic Trust**

To ensure peace and stability in the Western Pacific it was important to keep the islands in Micronesia free from foreign occupation. The United Nations Security Council determined that the only way to make this happen was to make the Micronesian Islands

that were formerly under Japanese control a "strategic trust" under the protection and care of the United States. Besides, it was the United States that had captured these islands from the Japanese, and it deserved the right to be the administering authority, with rights to develop them as it saw fit.

The year 1994 marked the 50th anniversary of the United States liberation of the Micronesian Islands from the former Japanese Empire. Since 1944, the United States has been responsible for the development of these islands, although it was not until 1947 that the United Nations Security Council entrusted the care of the islands, excluding Guam, to the United States government under the mandate terms of the TTPI. This arrangement was later known as a "strategic trust" which would forbid any country other than the United States to construct fortifications and other military facilities on the islands. In order to prevent the reuse of the islands for an attack against America and the West, the United States had to fortify these islands and maintain a military presence in the region.<sup>39</sup> Naval facilities and air bases were strategically emplaced on Guam to enhance U.S. military capabilities in the Asia/Pacific region.

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<sup>39</sup> John C. Dorrance, "The United States and the Pacific Islands," (Praeger: Westport. 1992), p.74.

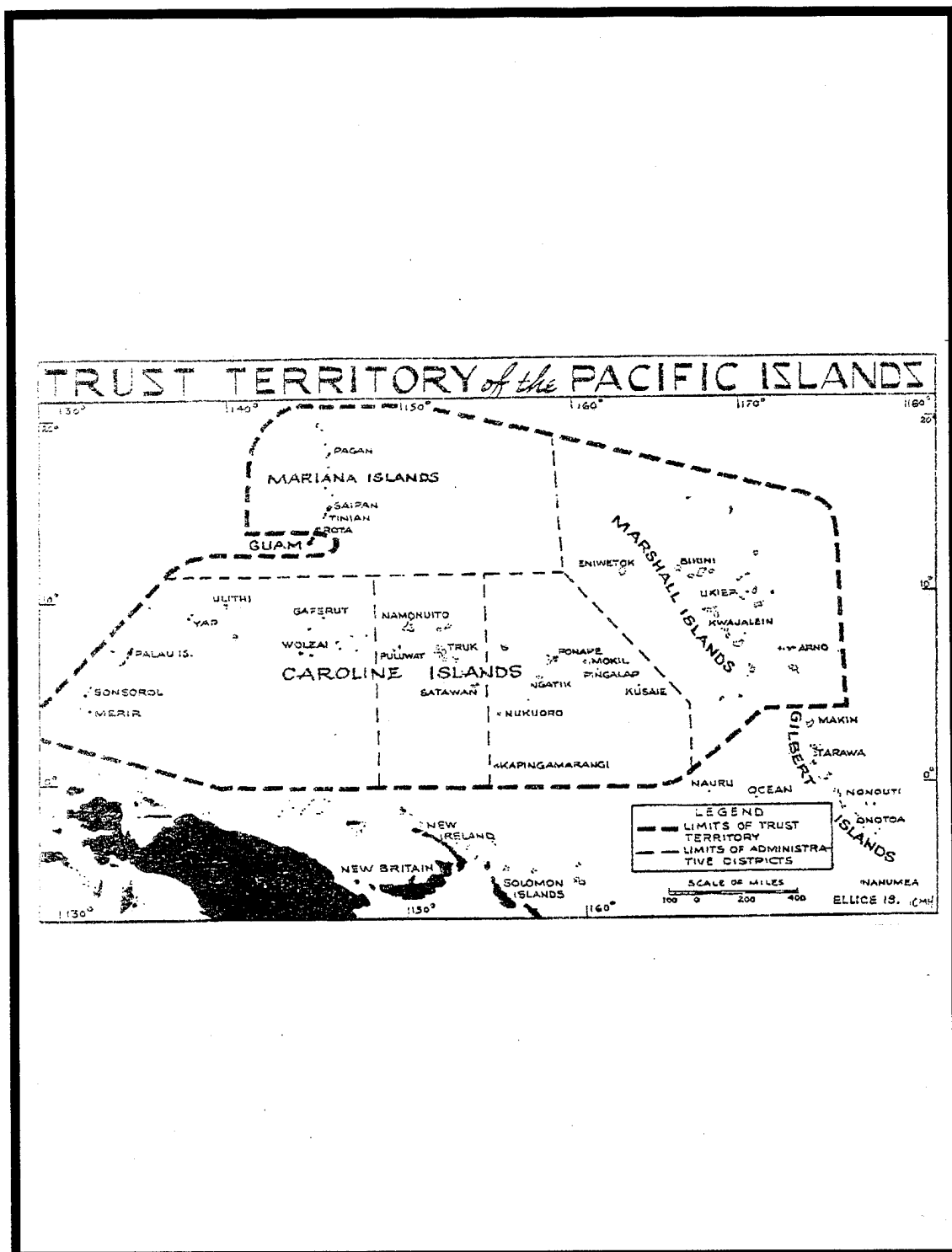


Figure 14: Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. Even though the islands of Guam, Nauru, and the Gilberts are geographically Micronesian, they were not administered under the TTPI, thus their exclusion from the broken line. Map Source: Herold J. Wiens, "Pacific Island Bastions of the United States," 1962, p. 104.



## **2. To Annex or Not? An American Dilemma**

The United States' task of administering the islands without annexing them was baffling. Many thought that the United States would have to colonize them, using force against the islanders if necessary, in order to instill order and stability in the region. The issue was whether to annex and colonize the islands or not. Later on, without noticing what it was doing, the United States found itself performing administrative functions of a colonial power at a time when many Americans were uncertain about the virtues and consequences of colonialism. After all, the war the United States had just won was to terminate imperialism.

After the war, the United States found itself contemplating the issue of whether to annex Micronesia and make it like Guam and the other American possessions in the region, or to assist in the islands' development toward self-governance and eventually independence. Annexing the islands would only make the United States appear as imperialistic as the countries it had just defeated. To set them free would only attract other potential powers to occupy them. Besides, the islands were far from being able to govern, much less defend, themselves. It would be more immoral for the United States to let the islands go in their condition than if to annex them and at least see to it that they were taken care of.

The natives were given freedom and the chance to govern themselves, but they were never this free since the Spanish Administration took control of them in the 16th Century, and had little experience in government. They had never experienced democracy of any kind--American or otherwise-- and it would be very difficult for them to carry on this democratic form of government without any background. At the end of the war, the U.S. military could not teach the natives democracy because the military itself was hardly democratic in theory or practice. Besides, America was still preoccupied with its own interest of defense and security issues, and it did not have time to worry about political development for the islands.

### 3. Security Arrangements

The security arrangements established for the Micronesian Islands included 100 percent defense in the event a country attempted to seize the islands from the United States. At the beginning of World War II, Japan had invaded Guam, the Philippines, and Pearl Harbor. The United States was never again going to allow such invasions. American officials swore that these islands would be under the complete control of the United States and that they would never again fall in the hands of a foreign country.

When the United States experienced difficulties in maintaining the peace in the region and securing the islands all by itself, it began looking for alternatives to help lessen the burden. Finally, American officials settled for some forms of security arrangements to help maintain peace and order in the Asia/Pacific. The security arrangements made included those of the Australia-New Zealand-United States (ANZUS), U.S.-Japan, U.S.-Korea, U.S.-Philippines, and U.S.-Thailand. All of them hinted that if one got invaded, the other(s) would come to its rescue. Later interpretations of these agreements, however, indicated that the initial perception of the sincerity of the countries involved was questionable. As the years went by, the doubts increased.

### 4. The TTPI Under the Spoils of a U.S. Administration

Our fathers who art in Washington  
Hallowed by thy funds,  
Thy authorization come, thy appropriations be done,  
in Yap as they are in the President's budget office.  
Give us this day our quarterly allotment,  
and forgive us our over-runs, as we forgive our deficits.  
And lead us not into dependence, but deliver us from inflation,  
So ours will be the territory, and the power,  
and the authority forever.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>40</sup>John Mangefel, a well known Yapese legislator at the time, used his revised version of the Lord's Prayer to express his views of the failing U.S. financial assistance programs that did not produce the kinds of results expected during the American administration of Micronesia. The quote may be found on page 93 of Goodman and Moos's "The United States and Japan in the Western Pacific: Micronesia and Papua New Guinea."

After WW II, the naval administration of Micronesia was operating without any input from either the Department of State or the Department of the Interior. The U.S. Navy treated the islands as if they held the same status as Guam. Unsatisfied with the way the Navy was executing the United States policies for Micronesia, the State and Interior departments wanted their shares in managing affairs of the newly acquired territory.

Because the departments could not agree on the programs set out for Micronesia, they ended up dividing issues at hand affecting the region and the United States. Everything that had to do with the care and welfare of the natives and the environment of the area would fall under the Interior Department's jurisdiction. The Department of the Navy took charge of the defense of the islands and the actual governance until Interior officials could get on board. In order to run its defense operations and carry on its security responsibilities, portions of land and sea were under the full control of the Navy.

At the end of World War II the natives were already enjoying their liberation from the Japanese, but again were not quite sure of exactly how to go about running their own political affairs. Almost all of them had no training or experience in government operations. As time passed, there were small groups organized from the family system, and later, the groups expanded and merged with others, forming community-size organizations. While the United States was pondering their fate, the natives were also reestablishing and restrengthening the hierarchical rule of chiefs.<sup>41</sup>

However, from some U.S. officials' points of view about the emerging local and traditional forms of Micronesian government, something more had to be done. Finally, the officials, mostly civilians, believed that American democracy was best for the islands and that the natives should be taught everything about the American way of life. This occurred despite the fact that the islands, with the exception of Guam, were also flying the United Nations flag while under the United States's care as trust territories.

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<sup>41</sup>In the outer or more remote islands this chiefdom system never ceased to exist despite all attempts by the former colonial powers to eliminate it. But on some of the larger islands where the colonial troops were successful, the system was totally eliminated.

From the islanders' point of view, something had to be better than the Spanish, German, or Japanese systems. Almost every native was receptive to any American proposal. But there were also those that still did not care, or simply, could not help, but accept the new system. Nevertheless, many prospective island leaders began their education in American politics and lifestyle during the TTPI period. Today, almost all of these people hold the island governments' top leadership positions from presidents and governors of their respective islands to cabinet, legislative, and judiciary posts. Others chose to pursue careers in the private sector, serving as presidents and chief executives of their businesses.

It was also during the TTPI period that the islanders discovered that they were not receiving as much assistance from the United States as Japan, Western Europe, and other countries. At the end of World War II, Micronesia never received an aid package similar to the Marshall Plan. According to some island officials, because of this, Micronesia had been much better off under Japanese control than under the American's. According to them, at least during the Japanese administration of the islands, the development progress was promising despite the fact that all the goods coming out of the islands were going directly to Japan. But these leaders were unaware that what little amount of goods kept back was only for the Japanese soldiers, officials, and their families living on the islands, and almost nothing went to the natives.

The point to note from what these island officials were describing is not the fact that the Japanese, while developing the islands, were tying them to the economy and political domination of the Japanese mainland. What they were describing is that the United States, as well as all the other Allied Powers, were not being fair in providing more assistance to other countries and even to their former enemies and yet, provided only very little support to Micronesia, their own dependency and responsibility. With all this confusion building up in the minds of many island officials, many of them initiated protests in small pockets against the United States. Most of the activities, however, were clandestinely carried out, for the islanders knew that the United States administration could easily suppress them and simply cut off all aid to Micronesia, which at the time, was the

only outside economic source the inhabitants had. But, they also agreed that they should be thankful for the freedom the Americans had allowed them to experience, inconceivable under the previous administrators: to participate in the political affairs and the decision-making process that affected their livelihoods.

The Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, established in 1947, allowed the United States government to fortify Micronesia to a point that it could prevent another force from occupying it for further attacks to the West as in the Pearl Harbor incident in 1941. The whole Micronesian area was later known as a "strategic trust," a creation by the United Nations Security and Trusteeship Councils.

## **B. MICRONESIA DURING THE COLD WAR**

The Cold War between the United States and the former Soviet Union helped the Micronesian Islands buy time to develop toward self-governance, but it also slowed down the islands' progress in their economic development and infrastructural improvements. Because some islands were used only as strategic outposts by the United States to help it contain the Soviet Union during the Cold War era, they did not have the opportunity to establish economic ties or engage in any major investment and business ventures. The restrictions imposed on these islands especially while they were under the TTPI, were said to have caused them to lag behind economically. For this lag, the islanders now feel that the United States should compensate them for it, not necessarily in terms of dollars, but of solid and genuine assistance. The first American foreign aid that went to Micronesia was viewed in two ways: destructive and inhibitive. Perhaps an old Chinese Tao proverb best describes the most important needs of the Micronesians:

Give a man fish. He will have enough food to survive on for one day.  
Teach a man to fish. And he will have enough food to survive on for a long time.

In this sense, the Americans provided the "fish" but not the teaching. However, without the "fish" and the Cold War between the United States and the former Soviet Union, the island nations of Micronesia would not have been able to emerge. Again, the Cold War

helped Micronesia buy time for its island leaders to groom themselves for the successful transition from the TTPI government to their current self-governing political structures. However, the United States administration of Guam and the Northern Marianas are still under the influence of the strategic considerations of the Cold War. This means continued military presence is more urgent and security assistance are most important in the eyes of Americans, while Micronesians feel their needs are far deeper and more human than that.

With the case of FSM, RMI, and ROB, in approving the full membership of these Micronesian Island nations in the United Nations, the United States first had to thoroughly consider its national security interests in and around the region. Many believed that if it were not for Singapore's opening up facilities in Southeast Asia for the U.S. Navy after its pullout of the Philippines, Palau's compact of free association with the United States would have been delayed significantly, or not have been approved altogether because Palau served as a fallback position for a major naval facility. Also, were it not for the demise of the Soviet Union, membership of these Pacific Island nations in the United Nations would not have been approved.

### **1. Strategic Roles of the Micronesian Islands During the Cold War**

Former Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger described the strategic importance of Micronesia to a Congressional Committee by saying that:

Micronesia...(is) in a position to dominate a zone of transit encompassing lines of communications vital to United States' interests....The lines of communications from the Mideast and our Asian sources of raw materials can be controlled from Micronesia. Furthermore, an increasingly important north-south route exists through the area, connecting our allies Japan and (South) Korea in the north with our allies and friends to the South, Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines and Indonesia.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> An excerpt from the testimony of Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger before the Congressional Committee on East Asia and Pacific Affairs found in the Congressional records.

This description of the strategic importance of Micronesia fits an earlier description of the whole Pacific Ocean by James Michener found in his "Return To Paradise" when he wrote:

There is only one sensible way to think of the Pacific Ocean today.  
It is the highway between Asia and America.<sup>43</sup>

An expert analysis of the role of the Pacific Islands in the nuclear and missile age is shared by Herold J. Wiens. More than thirty years ago, Wiens wrote:

Aside from the military importance of the Pacific Islands, they are also of strategic value in commercial maritime and air transportation. In these roles they serve not only as refueling and re-supply stops, but also as origins and destinations of freight and passenger movements.<sup>44</sup>

In fact, Wiens concluded that:

[t]he Pacific islands continue to have vital strategic functions which the nuclear age and missile developments have changed but not decreased. In the vast reaches of the Pacific, land is scarce and often is measured in hundreds of acres rather than in thousands of square miles. Nevertheless, the value of many of the American possessions in the Pacific justifies their description as island bastions in the political and military strategy of the United States.<sup>45</sup>

Today, the islands are best for possible fallback positions if further pullouts are experienced in Korea, and Japan. However, the lack of funds for such an option will prevent the islands from being utilised fully of their strategic advantages. The United States has maintained the position that it is more profitable to hold on to current overseas facilities than to build new ones.

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<sup>43</sup>James Michener, "Return to Paradise," (New York: Random HoU.S.e, 1951), p. 436.

<sup>44</sup>Herold J. Wiens, "Pacific Island Bastions of the United States," (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1962), p. 112.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., p. 122.

## 2. The Strategy of Denial

The Micronesian Islands were kept under American control in order to fortify them as a "strategic trust" authorized by the United Nations and to protect the West from any foreign aggression in the Western Pacific area. The first threat was a possible reemergence of Japan. Because of this, three Pacific countries, Australia, New Zealand, and the United States created the ANZUS Treaty which aimed at keeping Japan out of the region. When Japan appeared to be no longer threatening, the three countries modified the treaty and established goals aimed against an aggressive expansion of the former Soviet Union.

The strategy of denial, on the other hand, was to prevent another power from occupying the islands of Micronesia, and it has been successful for fifty years. The United States helped develop those islands the military considered to be the most strategically important. The islands included Saipan, Kwajalein, and the U.S. possession, Guam. From these islands the U.S. Navy and Air Force could successfully monitor activities in the entire region and deny access to adversaries.

During this time, American bases in Korea, Japan, on Okinawa, Taiwan, the Philippines and in Australia played all the major strategic roles. For this reason, there was not much strategic value given to the smaller islands in the Pacific during the second half of the Cold War. But before that, and before the several Asian-American relations enhanced, the continuation of "political, economic, and social programs in the islands to provide an incentive to the islanders to 'identify their desires and aspirations with ours', " was "in the vital interests of the United States."<sup>46</sup> Before the assurance of improved, solid, and binding United States relations with Asian and other Pacific countries, the Micronesian Islands were some of the most strategically important islands for the security of the United States. In fact, according to then Rear Admiral Lemos during his testimony before a Senate sub-committee, there were three reasons why the Pentagon considered the

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<sup>46</sup>Dwight A. Lane, "Micronesia and Self-Determination," National Security and International Trusteeship in the Pacific, Wm. Roger Louis, ed., (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1972), p. 77.



Micronesian Islands vital to the national Security of the United States. As quoted by Dwight A. Lane in an article found in "National Security and International Trusteeship in the Pacific," in 1968, the Admiral said that:

The islands are strategically located, they could provide useful bases in support of military operations, and they provide valuable facilities for weapons' testing. Our continuing strategic requirements in the Pacific and our own need to further develop United States missile capabilities will make the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands increasingly valuable to the United States security interests in the area....The islands are a natural backup to our forward bases in East Asia. Our major commitments in Asia and our deployments in the Western Pacific make it important that these islands be denied to potential enemies.<sup>47</sup>

### **3. Opening and Freeing Up Micronesia: The Real Liberation**

For thirty years under the Japanese administration of the Micronesian Islands, the region received very little attention by the United States or anyone else. For about the same number of years after World War II, the United States Government acted as guardian of the region. As a result, there is not a whole lot of "unclassified" written resource material about the Micronesian Islands during most of these periods. The ones about the region during the Japanese administration are written mostly in Japanese as would be expected. Just recently, many Western archaeologists, journalists, historians, and now even scuba divers have started to write more about the Micronesian Islands. More scholarly journals and books about Micronesia are needed. If anything, they would provide policy makers some background about some of the most important aspects about Micronesia before making the policies that will affect the islanders and Americans as well. Only after the region and its history becomes well-known and understood, and only after it obtains total independence and not tied in any way to any neo-colonial influences can the islanders feel that they are fully liberated. Their historical experiences, however, has affected the way they think about pursuing the future that is best for them: total independence, full integration with the United States as states, or half-and-half whether as

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<sup>47</sup>Ibid.

a commonwealth, free-association, or otherwise. Furthermore, the natives' internal political and ideological differences have hindered their moves toward their goals.

#### **4. A Marianas Archipelago Cold War?**

Other than the global Cold War that went on between the United States and the former Soviet Union, and the cold war between the Republic of Korea and the Democratic Peoples' Republic of Korea, on a much smaller scale, a cold war which is more like a political dispute between the Northern Marianas and the island of Guam has also been in existence. Many Chamorros and Carolinians today agree that this miniature cold war is still serious enough that it will not allow the CNMI and Guam to merge and become one political entity.

One of the advantages of a merger is that together they can pursue either total independence from the United States, or together become the 51st state of the Union. Unless the citizens of both political entities get rid of their biases, they will continue to blind themselves of the advantages of merging, and each will eventually experience numerous economic aid shortages from large cuts by the United States.

In the minds of some "hawkish" American officials, the islands will continue to receive cuts in their federal aid programs until they get their acts together, never mind the fact that it was the United States that kept the islands apart in the first place ever since the end of the Spanish-American War.

The origin of this so-called cold war dates back to the days at the end of the 19th Century when the United States annexed only Guam and allowed the Spanish government to sell most of the Micronesian Islands including the Northern Marianas to Germany. Of the three parts and levels of intensity, this may be labeled the first part of the Mariana Islands cold war because of the two different colonial powers in the same region that later found themselves at war in Europe. Separately, the United States and Germany controlled people of the same background and lineage. Although it was quiet in the Western Pacific during the First World War, there was obviously tension between the United States and Germany that also influenced the natives.

The second part of the Marianas cold war began during the Japanese administration of the former German islands. The intensity was even greater than during the previous era. Guam at this time was still governed by U.S. Navy officers. At the beginning of World War II, some Northern Marianas Chamorros became Japanese collaborators and assisted in the Japanese invasion of Guam in 1941. Some of these collaborators even took part in the physical abuse and murder of their own relatives on Guam. Today, many argue that these people were not really collaborators and that they only did what the Japanese ordered them to do, or they, too, would be beheaded.

After the war, the current phase of the Marianas cold war began when the citizens of the Northern Marianas practically begged the Guamanians for unification and to be included in the Organic Act of Guam in 1950. When Guamanian officials flat-out denied the request because of fear that they would end up with the burden to develop the war-torn islands, the Chamorros and Carolinians in the Northern Marianas began efforts to pursue a better political status for themselves.

Now that the islands north of Guam are a commonwealth, Guamanian officials asked if they could join them, but the CNMI officials responded negatively. Guam is now seeking to become a commonwealth on its own, and will most likely achieve it before the end of the Clinton administration. If and when it does, it will most likely receive more and better support from the United States than what the CNMI gets.

However, many U.S. officials consider two commonwealths in the same archipelago redundant and ridiculous. They believe that the two polities should merge and together pursue statehood or independence, if not a commonwealth together. If the two should remain separated, it would be ridiculous to allow a statehood status for each of them. These same U.S. officials think that the only way for a statehood political status for the Mariana Islands to be even considered is if the two American territories unite and together pursue the status.

## **5. An Overview Of Contemporary Micronesia**

From 1944 to 1962, the U.S. Navy and the Department of Interior encouraged a slow process of political, economic, and social conversion in the Micronesian Islands, from a Japanese to an American style. The natives found it increasingly difficult to exert initiatives on their own. The truth is that the forced dependence on former colonial powers caused a "brain drain" among the indigenous people who might have possessed the necessary skills for public administration, government operation, technical needs, leadership, and management. For example, under the Japanese the natives were allowed to attend classes only up to the third grade and most of the lessons were on Japanese traditions and cultures, all in Japanese. Under the Spanish administration, the schools were run mostly by the church. The lessons were predominantly the doctrines and philosophy of Catholicism which were taught mostly in Latin or Spanish, and were difficult to understand.

Other than the given natural beauty of the people and tropical island sceneries, the only other attractive things about the islands as seen by other nations are the abundance of marine resources surrounding them and, depending on their geographical settings, the strategic importance of their location. Mainly for economic ventures in marine resources, in the late 1980s and at the turn of this decade, countries like China and Sweden established diplomatic relations with some of these island nations in order to initiate favorable economic and political deals.

Because of their economic needs and physical vulnerabilities in the Western Pacific, the RMI, FSM, and ROB have each agreed to a "free association" relationship with the United States, while the CNMI and Guam remain U.S. territories. To date in Micronesia, the three "freely associated states" have become members of the United Nations, with the ROB, formerly Palau, being the latest and 185th member of the international organization. The ROB joined the United Nations in November, 1994. The FSM and RMI joined the United Nations at the same time the two Korean countries became members in 1991.

So far, all of the Micronesians have maintained an unblemished record in practicing capitalism, Western democratic values, and human rights. Political and economic

progress, however, perhaps needs to be monitored, and in some cases guided. There are still numerous problems being encountered by the island natives in their political and economic endeavors. Some of these are the restraints imposed on them by the United States Federal Government in the areas of trade, immigration, and sovereignty issues. Little by little the islanders are looking for alternatives, by-passes, or loopholes in the U.S. Government-imposed restraints in order to achieve their desires of prosperity and economic self-reliance. For these reasons, they look to Asia and even to some European countries.

While other countries have expressed interests in Micronesia, the islands flirt with the ideas of outside countries as prospects for economic development. If the West, and particularly the United States pays little attention to the needs of the Micronesian Islands or fails to provide the necessary guidance and support, the islands may succumb to the influence of other countries, and maybe even tilt against the West.

Democracy, as introduced by the Americans, was initially hard to grasp, but was quickly accepted by the natives as much better than any ideology they had experienced in the past with the previous powers. Besides, it came to Micronesia at a time when the rest of the world was also in pursuit of peace and prosperity.

With financial assistance, the United States government helped Micronesia in every area from health care and education to the protection of their islands from future invasions. With this assistance, the United States enabled the natives to rebuild and develop their islands' infrastructure, and at the same time, preserve what was left of their culture.

Many lucky islanders schooled in the Western ways found themselves back in the islands as responsible members of their respective communities. Today these same islanders are presidents, governors, senators, legislators, directors, and other important people holding positions in governmental structures patterned after the United States system of offices. This system has helped ensure stability in the region. However, when the United States became unattentive and showed little interest in the region, the same island leaders began to worry about the commitment of the United States government to assist in the development of their islands and provide for the welfare of their people. The worry intensified during the Vietnam War, or Indo-Chinese conflict when the United

States found itself being overcome by events both at home and abroad. Because of this lack of attention, the native leaders took it upon themselves to pursue the government they thought could ensure continuing stability and developmental progress on their respective islands.

At first, every development was supposed to progress regionally and eventually work toward a unified Micronesia. However, some Micronesian leaders opposed the unification that would put them under one sovereign government. They feared that unification would cause them to lose their local sovereignty, culture, traditions, and their identity. Many of them feared that because of the islands' dispersion, they would eventually be forgotten, under-represented, and perhaps even totally ignored by those in power.

The United States, while administering the islands under the United Nations TTPI, recognized the diversity of culture, language, and people of Micronesia. Because of this, some Micronesian and American officials recommended and even encouraged a split or division of the six former TTPI districts of Micronesia.<sup>48</sup> Since the late 1960s, these same officials have recommended that the people from each district initiate efforts and exercise their self-determination rights to become independent and sovereign nations. Some islanders argued that this was just another American strategy to "divide and conquer" the emerging island nations. The process, however, was not as painless and easy as originally designed. Today there are still numerous issues at hand that need careful handling. These issues, if not handled properly, could harm relationships between each island nation and the United States.

The Guamanians, since the middle part of this century, have enjoyed the status quo as an unincorporated territory of the United States. They have enjoyed this once prestigious status ever since the American Congress and then President Truman approved

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<sup>48</sup>The former TTPI districts were a creation of the United States administration in Micronesia that was based on the six major island groupings: the Northern Marianas, Palau, Yap, Truk, Ponape, and the Marshalls. The districts were each governed by local district administrators or DistAds who reported to the High Commissioner, a U.S. presidential appointee that was jokingly thought to be a higher title than an Ambassador.

the 1950 Organic Act of Guam. And because of the better treatment the Guamanians were getting from the United States government, some Northern Marianas officials requested that their islands be united with Guam. The referendums held to resolve this issue produced negative results. Many Guamanians did not want to be burdened financially by the requirements to develop the "backward" northern islands.

Throughout Micronesia, the other factors that have contributed to the difficulty in unifying these islands under one administration of government include the lengthy duration of travel time from one island to another. In fact, this includes traveling time from any Micronesian island to anywhere in the world. The islands are just so far away that most people tend to avoid them in their travel itineraries. The most important factors, however, that continue to separate the islands are the differences in language, ethnicity, culture, and beliefs. No wonder each colonial power had a difficult time administering the islands that were also separated by hundreds of miles of sea.

Historically, the events on one island, including man-made and natural disasters were of no concern to the people of another, unless the natives on one island had relatives living on the other.<sup>49</sup> Today, however, long-distance and fast-moving ocean vessels, satellites, jets, and many other communication advancements have diminished the factors that heretofore separated the islands. Even current conditions, however, are scarcely sufficiently binding to create a united Micronesia.

The divisive factors in Micronesia are far stronger than those operating in the European Union (EU). However, what the EU is still struggling with, like currency and security issues, scarcely assert themselves in Micronesia. In this American era, the currency in Micronesia is simple. It is the U.S. dollar with the same value as anywhere in the United States. The security or defense system is also simple in Micronesia. It is the global fire power of the United States which affords protection for Micronesia.

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<sup>49</sup>Herold J. Wiens. "Pacific Island Bastions of the United States," (Van D. Nostrand Co., Inc., Princeton: 1962), p.17.

The American tax payers and the islanders themselves realize that it would be disastrous to provide so many dollars that would destroy all incentives to work and become self-reliant. If the United States will pay for the islanders' meals, these natives would not even bother to work for their own living or pursue a business venture that could earn them financial independence.

During a testimony before the Subcommittee on East Asian and Pacific Affairs, Honorable Richard Holbrooke, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs during the Carter Administration, shared his views on the results of handling U.S. programs in Micronesia:

I think that there are some very unfortunate aspects to what has happened to the social structures of some of these islands, when they have had too massive an infusion of assistance which, no matter how well intentioned, really wrecked the social structure and fabric of societies--or, if not wrecked it, severely damaged it.<sup>50</sup>

Today, however, it seems that whatever aid is found to be most appropriate, it is clear that that aid should be given to each separate ethnic group regardless of whether or not those groups opt for a united Micronesia.

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<sup>50</sup>Statement of Honorable Richard Holbrooke during a Hearing Before the Subcommittee on East Asian and Pacific Affairs of the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, Ninety-Fifth Congress, Second Session on the Emerging Pacific Island Community, July 13, 1978, Washington: Government Printing Office, 1978.





#### **IV. TRANSITIONS: TOWARD INDEPENDENCE OR STATEHOOD?**

##### **A. MOVEMENTS TOWARD SELF-GOVERNMENT SINCE 1947**

**"It is desired that the inhabitants of the island territories be granted the highest degree of self-government that they are capable of assimilating. They shall be encouraged and assisted to assume as much as possible of the management of their own affairs and the conduct of their own government. Local governments, insofar as practicable, should be patterned on the politico-social institutions which the inhabitants have evolved for themselves."**

Findings and conclusions of a Yale University study which was enunciated by then Secretary of the Navy, **John L. Sullivan** as a basic policy statement.

Efforts toward self-government were supposed to start immediately after the inauguration of the Trusteeship Agreement. However, U.S. preoccupation on security and defense issues in regards to its own national interests caused the administering authority to fail in its responsibility to promote economic and social advancement as well as development toward self-government or independence. Under the TTPI a Micronesian Congress was not established until 1965. The new internal congress granted the natives the opportunity to practice self-government. Under this new system, the island leaders met for the first time to discuss how to run their insular affairs by themselves. Many great proposals were introduced. But, if they looked like they were only going to benefit one island district, the Congress of Micronesia would not agree on them. The Micronesian Congressmen diligently studied what was best for their future: for the whole of Micronesia with its diversity to unite as one large political entity, or for each of the island groupings to separate and pursue what was best for its own future alone.

There were numerous problems that emerged during the deliberations to determine the future of the Micronesians. These problems ranged from racial issues to defense

requirements. But the issues that have made the greatest impact on the Micronesians remain the future and on-going discussions on the political status options that would best serve the needs of the islanders, as well as the United States. This remains the hottest topic in Micronesia because the preferred status will determine the type of livelihood the islanders will have in the future.

### **1. Status Options Considered, And Other Forms Of Federal Relations With The United States**

The several political status options that the Micronesian natives looked into as alternatives to the United States administration under the TTPI include the following: a) the status quo; b) independence; c) free association; d) commonwealth; e) unincorporated territory; f) compact of federal relations; g) incorporated territory; and h) U.S. statehood.<sup>51</sup> These would possibly remain as options in future political status negotiations between the Micronesian Islands, the United States territories, and the United States Federal Government. After serious deliberations, the Micronesian leaders narrowed their options to only three: independence, free association, and commonwealth. Because the natives could not agree on one political status for the entire Micronesian Islands under the TTPI, the districts eventually split. When they discovered that neither statehood nor total independence was feasible for them in the midst of the global problems during the late 1970s and early 1980s, the islanders settled for a commonwealth political status for the Northern Marianas, and free association for the Republic of the Marshalls and the Federated States of Micronesia. Palau at the time was the only district that remained under the TTPI.

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<sup>51</sup> Descriptions of the status options and their effects on both the United States and the islands involved are taken from the "United States Virgin Islands Background Information" covering the American territory's "Progression to Self Determination: The Status Referendum 1993," a product of "U.S.V.I. Commission on Status and Federal Relations" presented at the Washington Conference on Status on February 8, 1993. A more descriptive volume is Arnold Leibowitz's 1989 "Defining Status: A Comprehensive Analysis of United States Territorial Relations." For a more detailed analysis of each political status described, consult the latter reference.

The following are considerations that would affect the ultimate decision for any future political status chosen by the people. (1) commerce, trade, and customs; (2) citizenship; (3) immigration; (4) control over land purchase; (5) congressional control; (6) control of land and sea resources; (7) control of internal government; (8) constitution; (9) international relations; (10) defense and security; (11) human rights; (12) revenues; and (13) whether the status chosen meets international standards of self-determination, or not.

Because the TTPI does not exist any longer, it cannot be considered as a form of political status. However, during the 70s and early 80s, this option had to be considered because it was the first one that provided the most American support at the time, and many inhabitants did not want to give that up.

If status quo is chosen in the future as the islands' form of government, it would mean that the FSM, RMI, and ROB would maintain their free association relationships with the United States. The CNMI would stay a commonwealth, and Guam would remain an unincorporated territory of the United States. In short, there would be no proposed change to the current status or the federal-territorial relationships and the freely associated states.

The impact of the issues mentioned above and their effects on the present political status for the islands all depend on the islands' respective political relationship with the United States Federal Government. For example, on the issues of human rights, revenues, and self-determination, all differ somewhat from each other under the different political status. On human rights, any of the status quo options that are in existence, being used by any of the five political entities in the Micronesian region, and which binds a country or territory with the United States, has human rights protection guaranteed and enforced either by the respective country's constitution [Organic Act(s) for territories] or the United States Federal Constitution. On revenues, depending on the current status, revenues may either be from the special treatments and benefits by Congress that an unincorporated territory would have, to the full payment of federal taxes and state taxes that are guaranteed for all the states because of their status and for being members of the Union.

Self-determination issues at the international standard, also differ for each status option. Only statehood, free association, and independence political status meet the international standard for self-determination. All others, incorporated territory, unincorporated territory, and compact of federal relations do not, simply because the people do not vote on the issues by themselves. They either have numerous bureaucratic agencies and organizations lobbying for the status option each group prefers, or in some cases, actually deciding for the people. The commonwealth status, however, may or may not meet the international standard for self-determination due to the mutual consent provisions of the Commonwealth Act of the political entities involved. A possible reason that the international community does not recognize the other status as results of self-determination, is that the weaker countries do not have unilateral powers to terminate the status that they are in.

The natives of Micronesia initially did not feel that they were ready for independence, therefore not many of them were in favor of the option. They did not feel that they were ready for the United States-encouraged commonwealth status, either. But as evidenced with the RMI, FSM, and ROB, the people eventually outvoted the other options for more freedom in handling their lives as independent nations, and only the CNMI opted for the commonwealth status. Guam is in the process of pursuing a different type of commonwealth. So far, it appears as if it will obtain its new status soon, perhaps even before the end of the Clinton administration.

Free association status is based on an independent country's desire to associate itself with another. In the case of the only three independent Micronesian Island nations with a free association status with the United States, RMI, FSM, and ROB, the islands' natives are still allowed to get most of the provisions from the United States that they are already used to. This status has allowed the island nations to search on their own what is best for their development. The status of independence, but freely associated with the United States, has allowed the natives to gain more sovereignty over their own affairs. However, in those areas that the island nations cannot afford to manage, or simply cannot help at all, the United States Federal Government and the island nations have established

agreements, sometimes interpreted as treaties, to benefit both parties and help each other out. In fact, the unique features of the free association status include both parties maintaining their own sovereignty separately, and the relationships established are on equal terms and for mutually beneficial purposes.

Commonwealth status is either to become an incorporated territorial status or to pursue efforts toward independence. However, it all depends on what is established in the covenants that are agreed upon by the parties. Where the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, for example, is a form of an incorporated commonwealth, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands is not. Some unique features in this status are the removal and replacement of the territorial clause of the United States Constitution by mutual consent or joint action. This of course is done only if the United States sovereignty over the territory is to be maintained.

The unincorporated territory is a status that the island of Guam is currently under. Guam falls in the same category as American Samoa, Wake Island, Johnston, and even Midway. Most American territories that are "unincorporated" are also "unorganized," meaning that they do not have a constitution of their own and follows the American Constitution and the Federal Government's laws as well as an Organic Act which is not always a creation of the indigenous people. This political status does not meet the international standard for self-determination. Almost all the territories under this status were acquired for strategic purposes only, and that they were not meant to become states, nor for their inhabitants to pursue independent status.

Under the compact of federal relations political status, the Territorial Clause of the United States Constitution applies, but Congress is supposed to agree not to change the compact unilaterally and to treat the island territories under this status as a state. To date there is no island territory in Micronesia that falls in this category. Every issue or political consideration with this status is under the full control of the Federal Government.

The incorporated territory political status is only for those territories that are intended to become members of the United States like Washington, DC and perhaps, even Puerto Rico. The United States Constitution applies in a territory under this status, except

for sections reserved for states and the District of Columbia. Under this status the special economic and financial exemptions would end. Again, the status of incorporated territory is granted to territories of the United States that are eventually going to become states. The impact on areas and issues faced by the territories of this status is similar to that experienced by states.

U.S. statehood status, for the purpose of this study, is full membership in the American political family, where a territory is equal to all the other states of the Union. Only this status along with independence and free association are considered acceptable forms of political status that meet the international standard for self-determination. The statehood status, if indeed is the one chosen by a people concerned is considered an acceptable form of integration because it makes every citizen equal to each other. Responsibilities, as well as the benefits and treatments, are the same throughout. Unfortunately, it is not only the group of people who want this status that determine the final outcome. The U.S. statehood status requires approval by the American people and the U.S. Federal Government. It appears that no matter how much the people of Guam, CNMI, and other U.S. territories want to become states, the U.S. Government always puts a stop to any pursuit for this status.

## **2. The Options Chosen and Why**

The people of the Northern Marianas are the only ones that chose the commonwealth option, mainly because of fear that another country would simply annex the islands if they had become independent without the required defense structure, and because the area has very limited resource to survive on its own. But many still argue that it was the natives' desire to be closely affiliated with the United States and eventually become a state that motivated them to opt for the commonwealth status. Little did the natives know, however, that there would be numerous challenges to deal with under their chosen status. The commonwealth status option is also the choice the people of Guam are pursuing. The only difference is that this new status for Guam will eliminate most problems the Northern Marianas has.

The people of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of Belau all chose to become independent nations, but with free association with the United States. These people, rather than losing their sovereignty over their islands and resources by choosing the other options, chose to be on their own, relying on foreign assistance, mostly from the United States and Japan for their survival. Each of the political entities has a different form of relationship with the United States. The contents of their separate compacts, however, are similar in principle but differ in duration, financial provisions, and other forms of development assistance.

These freely associated states are each experiencing different challenges and opportunities under their current political status. For example, where the RMI is enjoying the abundant economic assistance and revenues generated from the United States lease of island facilities, the FSM is experiencing difficulties in its development.

## **B. MICRONESIAN SEPARATISM AND FRAGMENTATION**

Some of the most troubling concerns about the separatism and fragmentation among Micronesians include the new problems caused by the creation of the compacts of free association relationships between the United States and each of the freely associated states (FAS): RMI, FSM, and ROB. These problems began when Guam and the CNMI received an influx of Micronesians from all the islands of the Marshalls, Pohnpei, Chuuk, Yap, Kosrae, and Belau. As part of the compact agreements, the citizens from these islands can live, work, and receive most benefits as Americans on Guam or any of the U.S. territories or states.

On Guam, many citizens of the Micronesian Island nations are enjoying the lifestyle normally enjoyed only by Americans. The local government usually ends up with the bill that reaches millions of dollars to accomodate the citizens from the other islands. From educational expenses and foodstamps to welfare checks and medicaid, the government of Guam is spending more money in these areas for the people of the FAS than what was expected. The issue that is being debated now is whether the United States Federal Government should reimburse Guam for these expenses or simply let the local



government figure out a way to get the money to assist the islanders from the compact states. Some Guamanian officials feel that the burden imposed on them by the agreements between the United States and the compact states can be compared to the other unfunded mandates the island receives from the Federal Government.

If this issue is perceived differently, as such that the people of the Northern Marianas or Guam, are only trying to rid of or lessen the number of other Micronesians on their islands, an increase in the degree of animosity between the peoples of Micronesia and those of the U.S. territories can be expected. Luckily, this is not the case at all. What the people of all the islands involved need to be aware of is that the problem does not lie with any of them. They need to be informed that if the U.S. Federal Government does not live up to its end of the deal, found in the compacts of free association, the island people will have to go directly to the officials in Washington, DC to get their problems solved. If the solution calls for more money for the governments of Guam and the CNMI to help offset the burden, then those governments should work towards that goal. But, at the same time, if the FAS governments get some form of compensation from the United States for issues such as this, then the FAS governments should be equally responsible for helping to lessen the burden being experienced by U.S. territories. If no one government wants to be responsible for the problems, a waning U.S.-FAS relationship can be expected along with a waning U.S. faith from its own territories. A historical look at the Micronesian affairs between the U.S. territories in the region and those independent island nations, can perhaps provide a better understanding of the differences among the peoples.

Until recently, many Micronesians were not proud to be called "Micronesian" because of the derogatory descriptions given them. In earlier times many people viewed Micronesians as "rude and wild people."<sup>52</sup> This is only one reason explaining why the islands would not integrate. Another is the fact that as soon as an island group prospered well above the rest, it tended to administratively and politically pull itself out of the

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<sup>52</sup>Silica Johnson, "Early Missionary Activity on Pohnpei." *Nahlikend En Leng Newsletter*, vol.1, No.2, January 17, 1994, p.4.

Micronesian image or the TTPI environment. The first group of islands to take such action was the Northern Marianas Islands where Saipan, the former TTPI capital was located.

When the Marshall Island leaders noticed that their country would be better off by itself they, too, as well as the Pohnpeians, Chuukese, Kosraeans, and Yapese, began political processes to exit from the Trust Territory mandate, and the Congress of Micronesia gradually ceased to exist. Although these were the islands that made up the crux of Micronesia, and it was very difficult for them to cast off the "Micronesian" image, one at a time these islands distanced themselves from each other politically, economically, and socially.

The latest secession from the TTPI took place in the fall of 1993 when the Palauan and the American governments agreed on a 50-year free association relationship. On November 9, 1993, Palauan government leaders and U.S. officials signed the agreements of the latest compact of free association. On that day, the United Nations finally and officially terminated the TTPI, making the Republic of Belau the last "strategic trust" recognized by the UN Security Council and the rest of the world.<sup>53</sup> A year later the ROB became the 185th member of the United Nations.

The island group of Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei, and Kosrae, appears to be the only one that still maintains the true meaning of "Micronesian" which is embodied in the union's new name: the Federated States of Micronesia. This new nation, as mentioned earlier also has a free association relationship with the U.S., but it is good only for fifteen years from the date of its inception in 1986. However, the association may be terminated unilaterally at any time when either party determines it necessary.<sup>54</sup> So far, there has not been a valid reason for either party to unilaterally terminate the agreement that either ends

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<sup>53</sup>Michael Eastly, "At last! Palauans O.K. Compact with U.S." *Pacific Magazine*. Vol.19, No.1, January/February 1994, p.8.

<sup>54</sup>Philip W. Manhard, "The United States and Micronesia in Free Association: A Chance To Do Better?" (National Security Affairs Monograph Series 79-4, National Defense University Research Director, Washington: June 1979), p. 48.

or gets renewed in the year 2001. The FSM leaders have been busy studying their options for the post-2001 political status that is appropriate for their nation. Their options may again, as in the past, include United States statehood, commonwealth, free association (now the status quo), or complete independence.

The termination of the free association relationship with the United States worries many FSM citizens mainly because they still do not feel comfortable enough to be totally independent. Many of them fear that once independent, each island state would eventually secede from the union. Currently, some Pohnpeians believe that separation would be best for their island state because they feel that they would be better off by themselves than with the current union. Many of these Pohnpeians feel that the revenue they generate on their island ends up mostly on Chuuk simply because the state of Chuuk has the largest population in the FSM, which is the basis for the FSM's economic welfare distribution.<sup>55</sup> The consequences of separation, however, have kept them from actively pursuing secession from the already solid union. Many of them fear that if they chose to become a separate entity, the rest of the world would not recognize them as such.

One of several Micronesian images viewed mainly by foreigners and some Micronesians themselves is the picture of a poor, backward, and under-developed place. In other words, it is an image worse than that of the cold war concept of "Third World" countries. This is perhaps because of the lack of modern facilities and technology on many of the islands.

Some Chamorro speakers from Guam and the Northern Marianas even label the people from the more remote islands of Micronesia "Taotao Papa," "Gui Papa" or "Gi Papa" (a person or persons from below). Others sometimes use the term "Gui Tati" or "Gi Tati" which means "from behind" to describe not only Micronesians, but also people of their own kind that live in the lesser developed villages or sides of their islands. Where there is nothing derogatory about the terms because they are simply based on the

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<sup>55</sup>Herman Semes, Jr., (A Pohnpeian native and Golden Gate University student). Personal Interview. Monterey. March 14, 1994.

geographical locations of the people, some prejudice against the people from the lesser developed islands is still evident on Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands.

Today, however, there are more and more Micronesians moving to Guam and to the Northern Marianas. The daily contacts between these different people at schools and at work have helped dilute the "Gui Papa" or "Gui Tati" attitude, especially among the younger generations. The contacts and communications among these people have developed more understanding of each other. Today, even though it is still felt by many Micronesians, that prejudice is gradually disappearing. In fact, there are now more inter-marriages between Marshallese, Pohnpeians, Chuukese, Palauans, and Chamorros and Carolinians than there were thirty years ago.

### **1. The Federated States of Micronesia (FSM): Swimming Among the Sharks**

In the FSM there are at least eight different languages, cultures, and ethnic groups. But it was unity instead of separation that motivated these islanders to integrate into a federation and become a Micronesian country of recognized diversity. Naturally, and because of their vulnerability in their remote locations, size, and development stage, it made sense for these people to unite. Pursuing independence alone at a time of many uncertainties was politically unthinkable, and in the case of some islands, it was even suicidal, according to a few natives. Recently, however, there have been rumors and unofficial talk about a possible split or division within the new federation. Despite what the preamble to this insular country's constitution says, there appears to be a growing trend of disintegration among the FSM islands. Is it possible that these "sharks" are swimming in different directions as they become more and more independent from each other? Is there a likelihood of a breakup in this "unity in diversity"? Will it be the state of Pohnpei to lead the way out of the union, or will it be Chuuk, Kosrae, or Yap? If either Chuuk or Pohnpei prospers well above the other states and its people wish to take off on their own as those in the CNMI did under the TTPI in the 70s, will the FSM government allow them to do so? Granted, only the citizens of this federation can answer this issue. But the rest of the world should not just stand and watch, but assist in providing at least "what if"

scenarios in order to make them fully aware of what they can expect from whichever course of action they take.

The FSM has a free association relationship with the United States, but it is also an independent country recognized by the United Nations, in which it became a member of in 1991. The relationship between the United States and the FSM are bound by ten special agreements, from financial assistance and other provisions to military access rights and defense requirements.

Unlike Guam and the CNMI, the FSM is free to deal with other countries regarding development and other non-military issues. According to the compact, talks and deals on military land use rights and other defense and security issues are the only restrictions and should be avoided when dealing with other countries.

Recently, the United States and the state of Pohnpei experienced a small problem in their relation when a member of the Civic Action Team on Pohnpei stabbed a local. When the Pohnpeian government tried to indict the soldier and failed in its efforts due to the soldier's protection under the Status of Forces Agreement, the governor of the island ousted the Civic Action Team from Pohnpei. What many natives fear now is whether the United States will continue its support to the FSM government despite what the governor of Pohnpei did, or will it only treat Pohnpei state differently out of the four island states of the FSM. If Pohnpei gets treated differently, and gets only little support from the United States, will this contribute to a future split with Pohnpei acting like the "aggressive shark," causing the breakdown of the new FSM country? Whichever way the island of Pohnpei goes, it is only bound to be better than when it was during the TTPI years. However, the island will still need the support from either the United States or its new Asian friends.

## **2. Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) and the Pacific Tide**

The issue that arose as a result of the Marshallese decision to turn one of their contaminated islands into a nuclear waste storage has caused great concern among the other Pacific Islands. Some members of the international community are trying every means to

convince the Marshallese to change their minds. But, at the same time there are about just as many that agree with the Marshallese government on the idea that the islands to store the wastes are, perhaps the safest in the world. This issue alone will cause more Micronesians to go against any form of integration. However, if integrated, the Micronesian decision to turn one island into a nuclear dump site or not, will have to be reached together: not only by one member state.

This country officially became independent on October 21, 1986 when it also established its free association relationship with the United States. However, the RMI's compact of free association is different in context from that of the FSM's. Although both the FSM and the RMI have unilateral termination powers with the United States and are generally the same, the RMI's compact allows it to receive more financial provisions from the United States. This is due mainly to the number of U.S. military facilities in the area, as well as the unending compensation for the sufferings caused by the Bikini and Enewetok atomic bomb tests in the 1940s and 50s.

The Marshallese people are probably the most quiet and calm of all the Micronesians. This trait may have been a result of the consequences and predicaments these people experienced during and after the atomic bomb tests that the United States had to conduct "for the good of all mankind."

The Marshallese decision to separate from the rest of the TTPI districts and become independent has allowed them to keep all the money they receive from the United States, invest it on their own, and not have to worry about sharing any of it with the other Micronesian Islanders.

The RMI joined the United Nations at the same time the FSM and the two Koreas did in 1991. Since then, it has established a few more bilateral relationships with other countries than the FSM.

The Marshall Islands are mostly low lying atolls and the people of these islands fear that one day their home islands will be submarine as a result of the global rising water level. Many of the Marshallese fear that their islands will end up like the Spratlys in the South China Sea in which some of the islands there are submerged during high tides. Will

the Marshallese soon begin their escape, or rather migration, to higher islands or all the way to the continental United States in order to spare themselves the worry of their islands becoming the modern day "Atlantis"? Or will they tough it out until the last minute?

### **3. The Republic of Belau: Finally, A "Strategic Trust" No More!**

The Republic of Belau was the last member of the TTPI as a United States "strategic trust." This island group took eight referendums to approve a political status similar to the FSM and RMI. The reasons for the unsuccessful referendums were linked to nuclear issues, United States dominance in the region, and internal conflicts based on the uncertainties of a future political status.

After the last referendum and approval by the United States government, the Belauans, in the fall of 1994, went right into obtaining membership in the United Nations as the newest and 185th member. The natives of the Belauan island group are proud of their nation's achievement in finally reaching independence and becoming a member of the world organization.

However, many view the country's new fifty-year free association relationship with the United States to be very optimistic and ambitious. But, will the relationship last the whole fifty years? Or will it be changed halfway through the contract? Future events affecting the Belauan Islands will be the determining factors in answering these questions. These events could include the possible emergence of a cold war between the United States and China, a major regional conflict in the area, the lack of political flexibility for Belau to take advantage of a growing market in China, and the desire of the Belauans to associate themselves closer to their former Asian colonizers, the Japanese. Whichever the case may be, any disagreement on the subject could eventually cause one party to consider unilateral termination of the compact.

### **4. The CNMI Pulls Out of TTPI**

When the Northern Marianas economy appeared to be better than the other districts during the TTPI period, its people opted out of the mandate in pursuit of a commonwealth

status with the United States. Later, the Northern Mariana Islanders gave up their TTPI passports in exchange for American ones. Most of the people from these islands are now U.S. citizens as a result of former President Ronald Reagan's proclamation in 1986 terminating the United States's responsibility over the TTPI mandate. The commonwealth political status for the Northern Marianas was established and approved quickly in the late 1970s because it was in the best interest for both the CNMI and the United States to be as closely affiliated as possible, especially in the midst of a perceived Soviet build up.

The desire to leave the Micronesian image, and the pursuit of further advancement, were two of the motives for the people in the Northern Marianas for seeking a better political status. The people from these islands knew that they could not advance on their own. Therefore, even though independence and the status quo at the time were options, they were not feasible for advancement at the desired pace, and were outvoted for the commonwealth relationship with the United States.

The commonwealth status has allowed the Northern Mariana Islanders to develop their islands' infrastructure with a considerable amount of money from U.S. tax payers. In return, the United States obtains access to an uninhabited island in the northern part of the insular chain for its Navy and Air Forces' bombing practices. The United States also has access to air and sea lines of communications and to other islands where it can build and man radar stations and other defense facilities. Additionally, the U.S. armed forces conduct military exercises in the region,<sup>56</sup> from amphibious assaults to air assault missions, mainly with U.S. Special Operations Forces, Navy, and Marines.

With American tax dollars well invested in the CNMI, the islanders are enjoying every aspect of capitalism, without having to pay U.S. federal tax. Even though the natives are Americans, like their American-Guamanian neighbors to the south, they do not pay U.S. federal tax because they are exempt from doing so, according to the

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<sup>56</sup>Farrell, p.596.



commonwealth agreement, also known as the "Covenant" that was signed in 1976.<sup>57</sup> On top of that, the local tax payers get up to 90 percent back from their income tax.<sup>58</sup>

Even though the Immigration and Naturalization Services and foreign affairs are controlled by the United States federal government, the commonwealth agreement allows the CNMI to exercise some control over who qualifies for U.S. citizenship on the islands. Because of this, many foreigners from all over Asia have been taking advantage of this little-known loop-hole.

These prospective Americans come as laborers to fill the demand for skilled workers that the CNMI requires for its booming economy. They range from bar maids to technicians and even doctors, but most of them are construction workers exploited for their skills and cheap labor, in building roads, hotels, and other major projects on the islands. A large number of them are also employed by the booming garment industry that has been able to export sweaters and shirts to almost every region in the world.

Labor is cheap in the Northern Marianas. Again, the commonwealth compact authorizes the CNMI government to control the minimum wage since it is considered an internal issue. The compact also allows the CNMI government to handle all other matters relating to labor, such as workman's compensation, employee insurance, and unemployment issues. Because of this authority over labor affairs, the Northern Mariana Islanders get 26 pay periods a year, while on Guam and in the United States, the government employees get paid only 24 times a year.<sup>59</sup> The government, however, appears to be unable to fix the high cost of living problem in which almost every imported item is twice the price of what one would pay in the United States. This is because the cost to transport these products is outrageous. Also, the island caters mostly to thousands

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<sup>57</sup>Ibid., p.289.

<sup>58</sup>Oscar C. Camacho, (A Saipanese and the oldest brother of the author who, at the time of the first interview, served as the Deputy Director of the CNMI Department of Labor and Commerce). Personal Interview Notes. Alexandria, VA: June 18, 1993.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid.

of Japanese tourists that vacation on the islands every year, who buy the inexpensive American products they could not afford to pay for in Japan.

Since its inception in 1976, the CNMI government has been demanding more freedom from the United States in order to handle affairs with other countries that could provide assistance in improving the islands' infrastructure and facilities. These improvements are necessary to accomodate the islands' rising tourism and textile industries. The freedom being sought would allow the CNMI to deal directly with foreign countries for economic aid instead of relying solely on United States aid packages. But, the U.S. Federal Government has habitually denied these requests on the grounds that most of them fell in the federally-controlled foreign affairs category outlined in the commonwealth covenant.

An example of foreign assistance the Northern Mariana Islands could have received, was the generous Japanese offer to build an aviation radar tower to ease the growing air traffic problems in the region back in 1981. The United States would not allow the island leaders to accept the offer. As a result, the CNMI was without the much-needed facility for ten years. It took that long for the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration to get the contract out to build the tower.

## **5. The Case of Guam**

Stuck since 1898 as an annexed unincorporated territory of the United States, with a political status similar to that of Wake, Midway, American Samoa, and Johnston Islands, Guam never had a voice over its political status, until recently. After seeing that there was something that could be better than the status quo, the island leaders began to work for more sovereignty. The future political status of Guam is most likely to be a commonwealth, similar to that of its northern neighbor and Puerto Rico.

Guamanians have always been a proud people, and the indigenous ones call themselves "Chamorros." However, some of them still call their language "Guamanian" even though the same language is spoken throughout the entire Marianas chain. The spoken language in the northern islands is considered by most islanders to be the real

Chamorro language only because the people there sound as if they are more conversant with the older words that are seldom heard on Guam. Some refer to it as the deep or "Tadung (na) Chamorro" having ancestral characteristics that link it to Malayan-Indonesian, in the Austronesian language group.

One can easily note the presence of a mini-nationalism in these islands just by observing the pride shown in their music as well as in the minute and irrelevant differences in their languages. With the Chamorro language for example, the University of Guam professors who teach it, have both Guamanian Chamorro and Northern Marianas Chamorro in the school's curriculum as if there really is a big difference in the two. It is not certain if this is a sign of a continuing split or breakup of the Chamorro people in the Marianas, or a sign of a growing Guamanian nationalism, pride, or prejudice by some Guamanian Chamorros towards the Chamorros in the Northern Marianas who have also shown indications of a mini-nationalism.

The Chamorros in the northern islands claim that they are more versed in the native language than their Guamanian cousins, and vice versa. Today, many Guamanians as well as Northern Marianas Chamorros, especially the younger ones, are struggling with the language. This justifies the instructions of the indigenous languages offered in their schools.

One, however, still questions the necessity of the Chamorro language. Is it really important that the people there study it in order to communicate with the natives? Or is it only taught so that the language will not end up dead like Latin? Some are already convinced that the language has died. Besides, there are not that many people today that understand it or care to study it other than for a college credit or something to brag about. Others study and practice it to keep the language and Chamorro culture alive. In fact, much Government of Guam literature today is printed in both English and Chamorro. In the Northern Marianas, the practice is also taking place, but it also includes the Carolinian language. It will not be long before it becomes a law for the Filipino language to be included in the island governments' literature as well.

At the U.S. Defense Language Institute (DLI) in Monterey, California, there exists a list of languages that has both Chamorro and Guamanian on it. But, next to the word Chamorro, in parenthesis is "See Guamanian." This makes sense because if any Chamorro speaker outside of Micronesia says that he speaks "Chamorro," most people would think that he is from Nicaragua or from somewhere else in Latin America. Some people would also think that this person is perhaps related to Nicaragua's president, Violeta Chamorro.

It is much easier to identify people with Guam and the Marianas Islands if they say they speak Guamanian even if they were born in the northern islands. But these days, it does not matter if one speaks Chamorro or Guamanian because the people from that part of the world were at one time required to speak English anyway. In fact, they should all be fluent in it by now, especially since it has been the American influence that has kept them together, protected, and under control for half a century, and almost a whole century in the case of Guam. This by itself is proof enough that the indigenous language is not a critical one for administration or defense purpose. No wonder the language is not taught at DLI, or anywhere else for that matter, other than in the Marianas.

The Guamanians and the Northern Marianas Islanders have hosted numerous events including sports, educational, and cultural activities for their fellow Micronesians from Belau, the FSM, and the RMI. Trade ventures and cooperations among the indigenous people can be traced back to the pre-European discoveries of the islands, and only ceased to operate when third parties or outsiders got involved. Will the islanders ever be able to live a lifestyle and deal with their neighbors in the old ways? With the way things are going now in the region, there is a possibility that the old "Micronesian ways" may resume. Living the old lifestyle on the other hand, has already been proven to be difficult.

### **C. MORE TRANSITIONS FOR A CHANCE TO DO BETTER**

**"Like their ancestors who navigated the vast Pacific in open canoes, today's Micronesian leaders have embarked on a long and difficult voyage. Their destination: political sovereignty, and international identity and economic self-reliance."**

**Frank Quimby, Continental's Pacifica,  
Summer 1993**

As of November 1994, the last of the "strategic trusts," the Republic of Palau, now known as the Republic of Belau (ROB), became the 185th member of the United Nations as an independent country. The Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) and the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) became members of the "grandfather of multilateralism" at the same time the Republic of Korea and the Democratic Peoples' Republic of Korea did in 1991. The three former members of the TTPI, however, may now be independent, but they are only "independent with strings." In other words, these island nations still rely on the United States for most of their economic and security needs. The islands will continue to use U.S. currency and would probably never have their own. They will continue to have their islands defended by the United States because they will most likely never establish or form their own armed forces to defend themselves. The real issue in this kind of independence obviously has something to do with American sovereignty over these islands.

Because the islanders' desire to become independent and the United States' wishes to maintain its access rights to the strategically important islands, the RMI, FSM, and ROB each agreed, in the form of treaties, to continue to utilize U.S. currency and U.S. military in order to maintain economic and political stability in the region while continuing efforts to develop the islands. The continuation of efforts will decrease periodically as the Micronesians gain other means to develop. In the case with the RMI and FSM, the assistance from the United States continues for fifteen years since the approval of the agreements by the United States Senate and the Micronesians in 1986. The year 2001 will

either have a continuation of the assistance programs or a totally new set of agreements. What the new agreements would consist of depends on the outcome of the current ones. With the ROB, the agreements between that island nation and the United States will carry the development assistance through the year 2044 with an assessment every fifteen years.

Even though the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands (CNMI) is experiencing more political freedom than its neighbor to the south, Guam, it is still pursuing more flexibility in handling its affairs with other nations, especially those in East and Southeast Asia. Like the other Micronesian Islands, the CNMI is interested in engaging in economic opportunities in the most dynamic region in the world today. As with the Micronesian Island nations and Guam, the constraints being faced by the local government of this United States territory, however, are only the political restrictions imposed on them by the U.S. Federal Government. The natives of the CNMI today, mostly American citizens like their cousins and friends on Guam, are making every effort to take advantage of the huge economic development opportunities that are rampant in Asia. They are also trying to gain more sovereignty over their islands' affairs. So far there are two opposing views on how to accomplish this. One is to become a state of the Union and have equal say in the United States Congress and Senate as the current fifty states do. The other is to become totally independent from the United States and only, if necessary, rely on assistance coming from their neighbors to their west.

To date, of the Asian peoples, the Japanese are the largest donors to the islands in Micronesia, including the Northern Marianas and Guam. The Chinese are now making attractive deals with the independent and "freely associated states" (FAS) in Micronesia. The people of Guam and the CNMI are also pursuing ways to get the Chinese to do the same on their islands. Other than on Guam, Chinese investors have experienced much luck in their investments in the region. But again, the political restraints imposed on the Guamanians and the people of the CNMI by the United States Federal Government, are the only hindrances the natives are encountering each time the island leaders want to accept the assistance and more investments from Asian countries and many others.

As late as 1995, Guam was still trying practically every political strategy to get the United States government to approve its request to become a commonwealth. Unlike its commonwealth neighbor to the north, the CNMI, Guam was never administered under the TTPI, and excluding the time that the Japanese controlled it during WW II, it has always been an "unincorporated, unorganized" territory of the United States. This is only one reason the island is undergoing more congressional constraints in its political quests than the other islands in the region. Another reason the United States is delaying the approval, or rather the ratification, of the Guam Commonwealth Act is that the United States Federal Government has already experienced numerous problems with its two other commonwealths, Puerto Rico and the Northern Marianas, and is being extra careful with Guam's move toward the same political status. Many American officials fear that these commonwealths might end up like the former United States colony, the Philippines.

The credibility of American policy is inextricably linked with the future of the islands. If the islanders failed to prosper, the image of the American administration will be blurred. But if the future is bright, the Americans will also benefit.

The ultimate dream of all concerned might well be statehood in the American Union. Should this be unobtainable, this thesis concludes the very least that should take place would be urgent and substantial assistance on the part of the Americans to those islanders who for so long have put their trust in American protection and guidance.

## **V. MICRONESIAN INTERESTS AND PROBLEMS**

### **A. IMMEDIATE INTERESTS**

As a result of the American education system and the Western curriculum in the schools in Micronesia, as well as the education acquired abroad, many of the inhabitants have come to realize that they, too, have the same rights as any other human being. These are simply and basically the human rights of freedom and dignity. Because they have experienced so much outside pressure and control over them, they seek political sovereignty. Because their numbers are so small when compared to other societies in the world, and because they have been suppressed in their self-expressions, they seek international identity. Because these people have been either altered or spoiled in the past three centuries since the arrival of the Western world, they seek self-reliance. And, because these peoples are unique in themselves, they wish to preserve their heritage, enhance their cultures, teach their languages to their children, and again become the proud distinct people that they once were.

The political sovereignty the Micronesians are seeking is evident in the preambles to their constitutions and both the national and international activities they involve themselves in. Guam's quest for a commonwealth status is indicative of the freedom from U.S. control the natives want. The Northern Marianas dilemma with its commonwealth status in political union with the United States, makes it difficult for them to participate in some of the beneficial activities the rest of the Micronesian Islands are taking part in. The CNMI government is still pursuing for more political flexibility in order to be able to be competitive with the Asian "miracles" and its Micronesian neighbors. The Freely Associated States (FAS), FSM, RMI, and ROB, are each encountering problems unique to themselves with the separate compact agreements they have with the United States. All of them wish to be in more control of their political aspirations.



International identity for the different political entities is very evident in each of the FAS, which has, especially, been made obvious when the United Nations accepted them as some of the smallest member nations in the world organization. Some islanders on Guam and in the Northern Marianas are showing signs of island style nationalism that could easily grow into an organized movement for independence and a split from the American political family. These quests for more international identity may be achieved only by the Micronesians themselves and by their own efforts.

The most obvious desire of many Micronesians is for their governments and people to become economically self-reliant. It appears as if they are only using their political status as the vehicles and altering them in such ways in order to achieve this goal.

Finally, the Micronesians wish to preserve and enhance their cultures, traditions, and languages. They believe that failing in this effort is robbing their children and grandchildren of their heritage, identity, and pride.

In order for the islanders to obtain these goals, they have involved themselves in international activities and networkings. Some of these are the global organizations that can provide them assistance and the opportunity to be recognized. Most of them, however, are regional in which the members share many things and issues common to them.

## **B. MICRONESIAN MULTILATERALISM**

### **1. Regional**

This section describes how Micronesians use regional and global networking to develop politically and economically. It also shows how these two network systems help provide security or serve as deterrence against any threat to the region. Describing the regional and world organizations that these island nations are participating in will provide a better understanding of their needs and motivation to seek and maintain their membership in them.

There have been numerous indications of regionalism taking place throughout the Pacific and especially on each side of these vast ocean. The North American Free Trade Area or NAFTA on the eastern side of the Pacific is sometimes viewed by Asian countries as a regional trade bloc that would keep Asian participation out. The Asian equivalent to NAFTA would be the East Asia Economic Caucus or EAEC which excludes non-Asian countries. The two, however, are dominated by the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation which seems to know no borders as long as the member countries all touch the Pacific Ocean.

Inside the Pacific Basin where the pure Pacific Island nations are sometimes considered neither Asian nor American, and are usually left to lag behind, exists several regional and sub-regional organizations that serve the local and immediate needs of the Micronesian Islands. These organizations are attractive to the Micronesians because they meet and satisfy the insular needs that are common with the other islands of the Pacific.

Over a decade ago, the Micronesian Islands were represented by the United States in most of the Pacific organizations despite the lack of, if not zero-level of American understanding of their needs. Today the current political status of the Micronesian mini-states have allowed them to be recognized as independent nations with self-representation and full membership in the region's organizations.

Some Pacific organizations, however, are concerned about the membership of the United States territories of American Samoa, Guam, and the CNMI. Organizations like the Pacific Island Nations-U.S. Joint Commercial Commission (PINUS-JCC) would like these islands to be under the United States partnership representation so that they do not have dual benefits: one from the United States and the other from their own separate membership.<sup>60</sup>

For the RMI, FSM, and ROB, however, even though they are not physically south of the equator, their memberships are welcome in many South Pacific regional

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<sup>60</sup>Bud Bendix. "Joint Comm'l Commission In Danger of Dying For Lack of U.S. Funding." *Pacific Magazine*. Vol. 17, No. 2, March/April 1992, p. 8.

organizations because they are already autonomous countries. Besides, there really is no such North Pacific organization in existence that is similar to any of those in the south.

Some of the "agenda of these organizations is to build consensus, develop a common front in international affairs, and gain external assistance to be less, rather than more, dependent upon the outside world."<sup>61</sup> However, it seems that the more involved the islands are in these organizations, the more they depended on the outside world, not only for guidance, but also for resources and other commodities not available on the islands.

Other than for resources, the islands' membership in these organizations have also allowed them to gain strength in pursuing independence and sovereignty from their colonizers. Additionally, these islands have used these "spider-web" organizations for defense and security purposes. For example, even without any formal bilateral alliance network, these islands share many similarities with each other. This alone implants the idea that "a threat to one of them is a threat to all of them."

One must understand, however, that this thought of a security system is just that--a thought. It would be difficult for an island nation in Micronesia, for example, to do anything about a threatening situation or force in Fiji because there is no organic military force, or any organization in Micronesia that is strong enough to do anything to assist Fiji.

The following are examples of regional organizations in which either the Micronesian island nations or the United States territories in the region qualify for membership:

#### **SOUTH PACIFIC COMMISSION (SPC)**

A regional organization that welcomes the islands north of the equator whether they are independent or not, is the South Pacific Commission which was established in 1947 upon agreement by its original members to cooperate on science and technology issues.

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<sup>61</sup>Michael Haas. "The Pacific Way: Regional Cooperation in the South Pacific," (New York: Praeger, 1989), p. xxi.

The pioneer members of the commission include Australia, France, United States, New Zealand, United Kingdom, and the Netherlands which later quitted in 1962.<sup>62</sup>

The CNMI, FSM, RMI, ROB, and Guam were all accepted as equal members in 1983. SPC has allowed the Micronesians to share in the search for ways to protect their resources and develop their islands. However, although SPC is responsible for enforcing the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone, SPNFZ Treaty of 1985, the Micronesians have yet to ratify this treaty. In fact, with the exception of Guam, the FSM, RMI, ROB, and CNMI, cannot take part in the ratification of this treaty because of the defense and security agreements that exist between each of them and the United States. Guam still has no say in the matter, whatsoever. The governments of these groups of islands do not have control over matters of this nature. This issue has raised many questions about the commitment to the organization and the membership status of the islands that are still under the control of the United States.

#### SOUTH PACIFIC FORUM (SPF)

The South Pacific Forum was established in 1971 which was designed primarily to cease the monopoly of regional cooperation by colonial powers. This forum has functions in such fields as fishing zones, telecommunications, trade, and transportation. The organization has expanded and picked up the functions of the Pacific Basin Economic Council since PBEC transferred its headquarters from Hawaii to San Francisco in 1991.

In Micronesia, only the RMI, FSM, and Nauru have been members of this organization since 1986. ROB will soon follow them. The CNMI and Guam, however, will have to become independent in order for them to qualify for membership.

SPF has a secretariat body known as the South Pacific Forum Secretariat (SPFS). The SPFS oversees the operations from the management of the forum itself to telecommunications and trade matters within its jurisdiction.

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<sup>62</sup>Ibid., p. 36.

Another body of SPF is the South Pacific Forum Fisheries Agency or also known as SPFFA. SPFFA is modeled after the Nauru Agreement Concerning Cooperation in the Management of Fisheries and Common Interests. This agency of the SPF helps establish procedures to regulate fishing within each member's 200-mile exclusive economic zones and the overlapping EEZs within the member countries' region. The SPFFA does not, however, have the assets to patrol, monitor, and enforce its own regulations throughout the entire region in its jurisdiction.

#### PACIFIC BASIN ECONOMIC COUNCIL (PBEC)

PBEC, established in 1967 and now headquartered in San Francisco, is an international advisory council with 800 corporations from over a dozen Asian and Pacific nations. The board members are free-trade-oriented business leaders interested in promoting investments in Asia and the Pacific.

The council has contracts with the SPF to handle its operations in Oceania and on other Pacific Islands. Those operations range from monitoring and recording all activities in every area from the small business operations in the islands to the fishing industry, shipping and transport, and the major construction projects in the region. The secondary contract function that the SPF is responsible to PBEC is informing and advising the board members on all the activities mentioned plus on any other interests that the board may have.

#### PACIFIC BASIN DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL (PBDC)

This organization provides the opportunity for American flag Pacific Island leaders "to formulate joint policies on fisheries, emergency management, aviation, development financing, and other regional issues."<sup>63</sup> The members of this council include the governors of Hawaii, Guam, CNMI, and American Samoa.

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<sup>63</sup>"Representative Juan N. Babauta Reporting from Washington." (Newsletter), Vol.5, No.1, February 1, 1994, p.3.

Because their's are also Pacific states, the governors of Alaska, Washington, Oregon, and California sometimes wish to participate in the council's activities, especially, if issues arise that affect their respective states.

PBDC is strictly only for American territories and states in the region. The RMI, FSM, and ROB cannot join this organization unless they terminate their free association status and again become territories or a state of the United States.

During his first month in office in January, 1994, the new CNMI governor, Froilan C. Tenorio informed the other members of the council that the CNMI would have to terminate its membership. He claimed that the annual fee of \$61,000 was way too much for the CNMI's budget.<sup>64</sup> However, since the previous administration under the former governor, Guerrero, had already paid the 1994 membership fee, the CNMI's participation under the Tenorio administration continued throughout the year. But it was still questionable if the CNMI government got anything out of the council for its money during that year, or whether its membership will continue during the following years. As of April 1995, the CNMI was still an active member of the organization, and in fact, Governor Tenorio ended up serving in the council as its president.

#### PACIFIC FISHERIES DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION (PFDF)

With functions that almost parallel those of the SPFFA's, PFDF, also provides services to promote the fishing industry in the entire region. Its services include managerial and technical assistance in the storage and canning facilities operations.

All four members of PBDC and the three Micronesian nations of FSM, RMI, and ROB are active participants of PFDF. This foundation was originally the Pacific Tuna Development Foundation (PTDF). The PTDF and other original tuna organizations were abolished in the early 1980s due to the gradual termination of the TTPI and the separation of the island districts that made it up.

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<sup>64</sup>Ibid.

Each of the current members of the PFDF has been able to generate millions of dollars with its tuna industry and by selling fishing licenses with an annual fee of sometimes up to \$3 million to non-member nations like Japan, South Korea, China, and even Taiwan.

## 2. Global

Almost each island's relationship with any world organization is interesting in that there are times when the natives of the islands cannot survive or live without it and there are times, too, when they cannot stand it. One world organization that the islands have had such "love-hate" relationships and experiences is the United Nations.

There have been development programs and other forms of economic assistance through various United Nations and World Bank agencies that have been made available, but some of these are believed to have caused the islands to become even more dependent on Western technology, services, and priorities. For the Micronesian Islands, most of these modernities are from the United States. But there are some from Japan, also.

Currently, only the three independent Micronesian states are members of the United Nations, and while they qualify to receive all forms of aid from the UN and other similar organizations, the United States territories do not. The latter only get their shares of UN assets through the United States.

If Guamanians and the CNMI islanders choose a free association or independent status in the future and denounce their U.S. citizenship, they may also qualify for membership in world organizations and certainly in the "grandfather of multilateral organizations." In the meantime, and as long as they remain territories of the United States, they will only be represented by the United States Ambassador to the UN.

There is actually some good in being represented in the UN by a nation with a veto power and a permanent member of the UN Security Council as opposed to just being a UN member without one at all. The people of Guam and the CNMI have certainly recognized

this fact. However, despite the consequences, they are now leaning more and more to become like their neighbors throughout Micronesia.

Although the gains are tremendous for a developing or a Third World country, there have been several occasions when the Micronesian Island nations did not benefit from their membership in the UN. For example, when some leaders of the region tried to plead to the UN for help to stop their citizens who had enlisted in the U.S. armed forces from getting deployed to participate in the Gulf War against Iraq, their voices were not heard because of the military agreements between them and the United States.

Examples of the United Nations agencies that have helped the islands develop include: the United Nations Center for Transnational Corporations (UNCTC); United Nations Development Program (UNDP); United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP); and the World Health Organization (WHO).

The latest global institution the islands became members of is the International Monetary Fund (IMF). This organization has allowed the FSM, RMI, and ROB to take up loans for the development of their respective countries.

Another body of the United Nations, called the Association of Small Island States (AOSIS) is really a "new power bloc" within the international organization that the island members use as a political tool to "tip balances in the... General Assembly."<sup>65</sup> In Micronesia, only the three independent island nations, FSM, RMI, and ROB are members of the 38-member association.

Among the functions of AOSIS, the most critical ones include the management of insular environmental problems like climate change, nautical disasters, waste disposal, the management of resources, and training of island peoples.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>65</sup>Robert Keith-Reid, "Island Power: A Group That Could Make Big Powers Take Notice," *Islands Business Pacific* (I.B. Pacific), vol. 20, no. 6, June 1994, p. 39.

<sup>66</sup>*Ibid.*



### **3. Bilateral Relations**

Because their "strong ties" with the United States, the territories of Guam and the CNMI are the only largely-populated islands in the Micronesian region that cannot establish diplomatic relations with other countries. The RMI, FSM, and ROB are able to do so as authorized in their respective compacts of free association. The RMI and FSM have already established such relationships with China, Australia, Philippines, the Maldives Republic, Sweden, Spain, Cyprus, and Peru. They cannot, however, and for obvious reasons establish similar ties with countries like Cuba, Iraq, and Libya. However, if and when the United States establishes diplomatic relations with North Korea, the independent Micronesian Island nations would quickly seek ties with it, too.

### **C. AMERICAN-MICRONESIAN DILEMMA**

Several issues have arisen since the island nations obtained their independence from the United States. First, is the question of independence. Are these islands really independent when they are still relying on economic assistance from the United States and others? In fact, they are still using U.S. currency and they still do not have their own defense. They still and will continue to rely on the United States for the security of their islands. The change in political status did not have any effect in terminating the islands dependency on the United States and others.

Second, is the issue of sovereignty. The islands may be self-governing and responsible for their own internal affairs, but there are other areas that they do not have any control over: military relations with other countries, and diplomatic relations with Cuba, Libya, Iraq, and North Korea. The Micronesians are only beginning to become politically, socially, and culturally, independent. Financially, it would take them a few more years before positive signs could be expected. The RMI will be the first to become financially independent, followed by Belau, and then the FSM coming in last between the three to be financially secure.

There is a possibility that the FSM would break up into little island nations. But, will the rest of the world recognize them or will it just stand still, wait, and watch until

the islands get their acts together? Each state within the FSM should seriously consider the consequences it would get itself into if the FSM, a brand new nation, should splinter.

The financial situation in Micronesia is the third dilemma for the island nations and the United States. The economic dependency has increased since the United States began its administration of the islands in 1947. Through the TTPI years, these islands were under the care, protection, and support of the United States. The natives became accustomed to the aid the United States government provided them to the point of absurdity that many natives never had to work or do anything to get food on their tables. Some people even call this a form of "pauperization."

Yet, there are still others that view the American aid in a different way. Many of these Micronesians share what others in Third World countries think about the types of foreign aid they get. They all ask the providers, "Why do you insist on giving us only turkey tails and giblets, when you have surplus steaks you can spare?"

Now that the islanders are used to the dependency lifestyle, can the United States simply cut-off all aid of this sort? Or should the United States provide instructions to the natives on how to be self-sufficient again like they were centuries ago?

The two United States territories in the Marianas Islands will also continue to be under the control of the United States for a long time if not forever. The question whether to incorporate these islands as full members of the union or to keep them just the way they are should get more attention in Washington than it has. Guam should be granted its commonwealth status and in similar ways be allowed to be like its northern neighbor. The United States will be facing another issue and perhaps a terrible one if it does not recognize the needs of these islands to become as closely affiliated with the rest of the American states. They have a promising future as perfect examples of the American non-colonial pursuits, but of the genuine care and support for mankind. Another promising future they have is that they can become the "Cayman Islands of the Pacific," but with the "American twist," of course. There's nothing colonial about this concept. The islands could also help provide for the American national strategies of "engagement and enlargement" which is simply the American extension and strategy to reach out and be

involved with every nation it feels is in its best interests. Today, however, it seems as if the United States would have to adjust its strategies as the world situation changes.

#### **D. MAJOR PROBLEMS IN MICRONESIA**

The major problems in Micronesia today include poverty, pollution, overpopulation (in relation to the small size of the islands), disease, and corruption. These problems exist, either because of or in spite of the rule of the three former colonial powers in the region namely Spain, Germany, and Japan, as well as the past half century of administrative support from the United States.

The new nations of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of Belau, plus the two U.S. flag territories of Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands are often overlooked while the major countries on each side of the Pacific are increasingly becoming inter-dependent and are rapidly growing economically. It appears as if the islands are being ignored while they lag behind. However, even at the risk of the islands becoming worse than "Third World" countries, the inhabitants of Micronesia and the United States territories are continuing to pursue the political status they believe can help achieve their goals for the future. It is vitally important to the citizens of these islands that they obtain all the help they can get. Of course they accept the philosophy of democracy and a free market, but the reality of their situation makes these goals very distant at best.

Several Asian and other Pacific countries have expressed interests in the strategic and economic values of the scattered island nations and the United States territories within the Pacific basin. In this post-cold war era, some of these countries, including Japan and China, are looking more and more attractive to the island nations and United States territories especially for economic development prospects.

If the West, particularly the United States pays no or little attention to the needs of the Micronesian Islands or fails to provide the necessary guidance and support, the islands could become anti-West, and succumb to the influence of other countries.

Unlike the huge assistance provided to Japan and Western Europe after the Second World War, the Micronesian Islands, including Guam and the Northern Marianas, never received an aid package or development assistance comparable to the Marshall Plan. After the United Nations approved the United States Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (TTPI) mandate in 1947, there was more effort put into reporting the island's progress to the United Nations than into progress itself. The major interest of the United States in the islands was the strategic value of the former and current territories, and not the welfare of the people. This is still the case, and the overall interest appears to be dwindling.

The drawdown in the United States armed forces has resulted in a reduced military presence in many parts of the world, and Micronesia is not an exception. The decreasing interests in Micronesia by the Department of Defense accompanied by the lack of interest in this region by both the State and Interior Departments have raised questions about the commitment of the United States to provide for the security of the islands against both "foreign and domestic" threats. This lack of American interests in Micronesia further raises questions about the commitment of the United States in the development of these islands to become an equal participant in both American and world affairs.

## **E. THE ISLANDS UNDER U.S. PROTECTION**

### **1. The Question of "Double Containment"**

Concern for an expanding Soviet Empire during the post-World War II years brought more attention to the strategic values of the Micronesian Islands, especially that of Guam, the Northern Marianas, and Belau. During this same period of the Cold War, however, some natives of Micronesia were worried that the United States was also "keeping a lid" on them--preventing them from developing fully to be equal and competitive with the other countries around them. Some even thought that this was some form of a "double containment": one containing the Soviets, and the other, containing the islands. This concern plus the increasing tension with the Indo-Chinese crises caused the American public to be divided once again on whether to annex the islands altogether or set them free.

## **2. Physical, Political, Economic, and Social Challenges**

One challenge that the Micronesians are dealing with in this post-Cold War era, is the influx of numerous foreigners from both sides of the Pacific into their small islands. Despite the development that these large numbers of outsiders are providing, this alone, in the views of some Micronesians, is a perceived threat to the security and welfare of the indigenous island people. They fear that the growing number of foreigners will eventually outnumber and outvote them on the issues that are only supposed to be decided upon by the natives themselves. Already there are over 7,500 children of alien workers that are now U.S. citizens<sup>67</sup> simply because they were born on the American territory of the Northern Marianas. Where there is nothing wrong with this today, the citizens of these islands should be informed of the example the island of Fiji offers with their situation in which the indigenous people are outnumbered by the descendants of outside laborers.

There are only very few Micronesians today that are familiar with the consequences of other possible challenges that could easily come about in the future. For example, not many of them realize that if an Asian country like China emerges and becomes a superpower, possessing aircraft carriers and a power-projection capability, their islands could once again serve as outposts and "stepping stones" to another region. The Micronesian people and their governments should be well-informed of all the possibilities that a great China could do.

If China should fail, the number of refugees to come out of that country of 1.2 billion people could easily be in the millions. This could also present a major problem for the island leaders to deal with if their islands were chosen to serve as safe havens for the refugees.

Other challenges such as natural disasters have even discouraged many major companies from investing in the islands. These disasters are mainly typhoons and cyclones, but there are also occasional tidal waves or tsunamis, earthquakes, and volcanic

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<sup>67</sup>Michael Eastly, "Alien Workers: An Asset Or Drain on Economy," *Pacific Magazine*, vol. 19, no. 6, November/December 1994, p. 17.

eruptions in the region, especially in the Marianas. Global warming, greenhouse gas effects, pollution, and rising water levels are just some of the other environmental problems that have also discouraged many potential entrepreneurs from opening up businesses in the area.



## **VI. THE INTERESTS OF OUTSIDERS IN MICRONESIA**

### **A. ISSUES AND CONCERNS COMMON TO ALL**

Physical challenges including global and transnational environmental issues as well as the contamination and depletion of the region's marine resources have all been of major concerns throughout the Pacific. The severity of these issues was evident during the Rio de Janeiro Conference in Brazil in which many island leaders and advocates of environmental protection participated.

One of the current concerns that hardly makes the headlines is the storage of nuclear wastes on an island in the Marshalls. The neighboring islands naturally opposed the plan to turn this island into a toxic waste dump site. Many industrial countries, however, are in favor of the idea, and in fact, publically declare that the region is perhaps the safest place because it is far away enough from any major populated area from both the East and the West.

If in fact the place becomes the dump site for such controversial wastes, who will be responsible for the security of the dump in order to prevent a rogue country from scavenging in it for the highly potent plutonium that could be used to process nuclear weapons? What degree of security measures will be established around this island to prevent any leakage of the toxic wastes? Who would be responsible to safeguard the transfer of the wastes to the dump site? Will there be an increase of piracy activities because of the more valuable products in transit? And finally, what will the future be for the islands and their inhabitants around the dump site? These questions deserve further study in order to accomplish the goals of both island peoples and those of industrial countries, but especially, to find the best solution to the management of this highly controversial waste products.

An escalation of the Korean peninsula conflict is also a concern for some of the closer islands to Northeast Asia, specifically the islands of Guam and the Northern Marianas. Will these islands' strategic values be elevated to the same degree as they were



during World War II and the Cold War? In order to provide for a more enhanced military capability to support the requirements in any conflict in the region, these islands will once again serve the interests and in the security of the United States.

If the tension in the Korean peninsula ruptures, or if any of the Asian countries experiences a major calamity and produces thousands of refugees, the islands could be looked at to serve as safe havens for these refugees as had happened on Guam and other Pacific Islands during the Indo-Chinese conflict. This alone would be a major concern for island leaders as well as others if preparations for such contingency are not made in advance. If the Korean problem is solved in a way that it reduces the need for U.S. forces in Northeast Asia, Guam, the CNMI, and the ROB will either be relooked for a possible fallback place because they happen to be the westernmost region under the American "defensive arc," or simply lose their strategic importance altogether.

## **B. THE INTERESTS OF THE UNITED STATES: STABILITY, STRATEGY OF ENGAGEMENT AND ENLARGEMENT, AND ECONOMIC GROWTH**

### **1. Stability in the Region**

There is nothing more important now than to continue winning the peace and maintaining the stability in the entire world. Only under this condition can the rest of the world be able to assist those in need without being hindered by conflicts of any sort including terrorism, internal unrests, and other disputes. Indeed, only under this condition can the Micronesian Islands continue its development programs and only under this condition that they can continue receiving all the aid they can get from the United States and from other countries as well.

To ensure this stability, the natives welcome the presence of American forces on and around their islands. The United States should continue at least its present level of military support to the natives and provide them the assurance that it is truly committed to their protection. More port visits and civic action operations should be incorporated into the current programs that provide the natives the assurance they need to feel more

secured of the many uncertainties developing around them. An ambitious, but perhaps a necessary and important operation to add to the current programs is the evacuation operation of everyone on the islands in the event a natural or man-made catastrophe occurs in the region. The minimum activity that can be conducted to provide this assurance is to exercise and drill the operation on a periodic basis, perhaps as many times as once every two years.

## **2. The Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement Versus Strategy of Denial and Containment With the Micronesian Islands**

If the United States is serious with its strategy of engagement and enlargement then it should begin within its own sphere of influence and with its overseas territories, especially if it wants to keep them. It would be shocking to the many Americans who have fought the battles on these islands if the Micronesian Island nations and the United States territories in the region each becomes a part of the growing Asian miracles on their own or with the assistance of Asian countries.

The strategies of denial and containment as they were implemented in the Pacific were doubtlessly and obviously successful against Japan and the former Soviet Union. The question at hand today is to figure out if the United States should still continue these strategies and if it is going to, then who should they be implemented against. Will the strategies work against an emerging China like they did against Japan and Russia during the Cold War? Will they work against a possible remilitarization of Japan? Or will the United States revert to the strategies in the event that a unified Korean peninsula emerges as another Asian power or if North Korea reverses its on-going peaceful programs and becomes a belligerent nation with enough backing by other powers to stir a major conflict in the region? Whichever course the future trend follows, the more appropriate strategy for the United States to implement will still be the engagement and enlargement strategy.

### **3. United States Economic Interests in Micronesia**

On the islands, American capitalism is growing, but the major investors are mostly from the Asian countries of Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Philippines, and the Peoples' Republic of China. Only after the Asian countries complete all the required infrastructures and facilities that are suitable for business operations in Micronesia, will American investors go to the islands and take part in economic investments and growth in the area.

In the past, American entrepreneurs had been discouraged from investing in Micronesia partly because of the natural disasters the area gets, but mostly because they would have had to be the ones to risk building the infrastructures and facilities there. The risks in the past were greater than they are today, especially that there were numerous uncertainties and conflicts in the region west of Micronesia like in the Philippine Islands and Vietnam.

Today there are still tensions in the Korean peninsula and the possible rupture of another Southeast Asian conflict in Cambodia. But these current tensions are perceived as unlikely to be equal to the Vietnam conflict.

Some Americans believe that with the declining state of the world economy, it is not profitable to take a business abroad or open a new one anywhere outside the United States. Contrary to this belief, there are more and more American investors who are taking their businesses and assets abroad and investing them there. These investors are the ones that have recognized the comparative advantage of low wages and massive high quality productions that can be achieved in other countries where the large number of workers will do almost anything to make a buck. The ones that are stubborn or have different moral values about work and profits, however, simply do not want to move far from the continental United States and are not willing to take entrepreneurial risks like most Asians are in the business sector. On the other hand, some of them are only waiting for the infrastructures and facilities to be completed before plunging into the gradually increasing dynamic markets on the larger islands in Micronesia. Waiting for the completion of these facilities, however, can cause American entrepreneurs to be too late.

Today, perhaps more than ever, American businessmen should emerge themselves with the growing economies in this region. Besides, the islands of Micronesia are only a few hours of jet-flight away to the most economically dynamic region in the world. While the island governments are politically stable and perceived to be that way for a long time, Americans should begin competing with the Asian businesses on the islands. Failure to be engaged in the opportunities offered by the potentials of these islands could eventually put the United States behind the Asian economic leaders in the region, as has occurred in other places such as Vietnam.

### **C. THE INTERESTS OF ASIAN COUNTRIES: PROSPECTS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR AN ASIAN-CONTROLLED MICRONESIA**

As in many other parts of the world, the interests of the Asian countries in Micronesia are peace, stability, and prosperity, following the "principles of peaceful co-existence" and inter-dependency. But some of the current trends in the Western Pacific do not portray the perfect picture of these announced interests of the Asian countries in the region.

Today there is a new trend of countries and people interested in the Pacific Islands. For some of them, this interest has always been there since they first laid foot on the islands and was only interrupted by the Second World War. The newer ones have only developed an interest in the region at the outset of the post-cold war era. But the vast number of these people interested in the Pacific Islands are not Americans. Most of them are from Asian countries. The countries so far that have vested interests in the Pacific Islands include Japan, China, South Korea, the Philippines, and even Taiwan--all are close neighbors to the islands. There are also indications that other Southeast Asian countries have started to join these countries in developing some interests in the great Pacific region.

If the United States fails to keep up with the activities of these countries in the Pacific, the freely associated states in Micronesia and the American territories in the region could possibly fall prey to these emerging powers in the East Asia/Pacific area. Both

economic and military strategic advantages in this Western Pacific region would be in the possession of these Asian countries. If the United States fails to attract Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), the Republic of Belau (ROB), the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), and the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) to become permanent members of the union as states, or as another constitutionally correct status, closely affiliated with it, and simply "to form a more perfect union...", the islands could easily succumb to the closer and richer neighbors west of them.

If the United States terminates its current relationships with any of the Micronesian Island nations and fails to recognize and promote a better one for the good of both Americans and Micronesians, the island nations will eventually become fully independent but with strong Asian ties that could garner enough power to deny even the United States access to these strategically important area. In a worse case scenario, the islands could easily fall prey to the emerging powers in the Asia/Pacific region, and the strategic and economic advantages would be in those countries' possession.

Since the demise of the former Soviet Union and the increase of the U.S. budget deficit, the strategic value of the Micronesian Islands and the United States territories have been decreasing. But today, one of numerous perceived threats and uncertainties, sometimes viewed as a form of economic espionage, is working toward an economic dominance not just as seen in some major cities of the world, but on the little Pacific Islands as well. America's enemies and friends would be difficult to determine in this little known scenario of this kind of threat in this little known part of the world. Is it possible for an Asian country or a group of Asian countries to take control, provide leadership, and assist the developing island nations in Micronesia as well as our own territories there? What are the interests of the Asian countries in the Western Pacific? What type of influence can be exerted and imposed by these countries in the region? And finally, can the United States afford an Asian-controlled Micronesia as an alternative to the current American-controlled one, and how would it react to that alternative even if it happens to be the choice of the natives?

According to Grant K. Goodman and Felix Moos, "Japan, in the light of her intrinsic national interests in the Pacific Ocean, wishes to see a Micronesia which will maintain intimate political, diplomatic, and security ties with the United States, but which will assert a mounting degree of flexibility in its external economic and commercial activities."<sup>68</sup> Their concluding assessment of Japan's interests in Micronesia as of 1979 indicates that:

[a] continuous United States strategic preeminence in Micronesia that can guarantee the stability of the Pacific Ocean is vitally important to Japan. At the same time, however, free access to Micronesia's foreign trade and resource development is also of great significance to Japan. If both conditions in the region can be met, that is, American security responsibility and Japanese economic freedom, then Japan may prefer not to have a highly integrated political entity in Micronesia since such a political unit, if realized, might present obstacles to Japanese interests in terms of reparations demands or economic barriers. However, given the pattern of Micronesian political division which has been developing in recent years, [late 1960s through 1970s] the possibility of any kind of all-Micronesian anti-Japanese backlash has all but disappeared. Moreover, from the point of view of Japan's future security, if, as seems likely, Japan's confidence in the reliability of the United States as an ally diminishes, then perhaps the Japanese government will wish to take a more direct role in the determination of the future status of Micronesia.<sup>69</sup>

This section examines the Asian-Micronesian connections and the Asian activities in the Micronesian Islands, from prehistory to the present, and highlights these events in order to make an observation of the degree of Asian influence in that part of the world.

After the Soviet Union collapsed and the U.S. budget deficit increased, the United States interests in Micronesia went downhill while several Asian countries increased their interests in the region. These Asian countries have been eyeing the islands as potential partners in pursuit of business endeavors as well as political affiliations of some form. According to Frank Quimby, a veteran Micronesian observer, these countries include

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<sup>68</sup>Grant K. Goodman and Felix Moos, eds. "The United States and Japan in the Western Pacific: Micronesia and Papua New Guinea," (Boulder: Westview Press, 1981), p. 253.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid.

Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan.<sup>70</sup> But countries like China, Philippines, and other Southeast Asian nations are also gradually penetrating into the markets of the Micronesian Islands.

Where there is a strong desire by both Americans and Micronesians for the islands to become self-sufficient, one has to be concerned about the fact that some of these islands are decreasing not only their dependency on the United States, but also their faith in the federal government in Washington.

This decline in faith is so great. It is almost to the point that if the islanders wish to, they could easily use it as a way to hold the United States liable for the islands' current problems, caused by a lack of a more generous assistance like the "Marshall Plan" program which could have helped boost the islands' economy. Because of the obvious "benign neglect" on the part of the United States, the island leaders have studied options that could help them catch up with the rest of the world, with or without assistance from the United States.

To date, the natives of the RMI, FSM, and ROB have opted for free association relationships with the United States which have given them full control of their affairs. This political status has granted the islanders more than ample freedom and flexibility to achieve their goals and become part of the international community. However, it appears as if the achievement of these goals are still distant at best.

In this era of decolonization, the three island groups have become independent nations. Though very admirable, this independence is obviously a movement towards further disintegration or separation from the United States. Failure to maintain close ties could result in not only a United States's loss of the islands, but also a loss of them to the influence or control of one or more Asian countries.

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<sup>70</sup>Frank Quimby, "The Micronesian Odyssey," a Pacific Report found in the Summer 1993 issue of Continental's Pacifica, a Continental Micronesia Airline tourist magazine. In this article, Quimby discusses some of "Micronesia's Challenges for the Year 2001" in which he starts out with: "Like their ancestors who navigated the vast Pacific in open canoes, today's Micronesian leaders have embarked on a long and difficult voyage. Their destination: political sovereignty, an international identity and economic self-reliance."

The United States still maintains responsibility for the defense of each of the Micronesian Island nations as well as the provision of most of the islands' economic aid which has been used to jump-start the islands economic development, but have yet to show any sign of progress. Despite the lack of progress in this effort, the United States in return holds onto its access rights to the region, has open sea lines of communication, military land-use rights, and other facilities for training and other activities if needed in war time. It also has some say in the islands' external and foreign affairs in which it prohibits the islands from pursuing any form of relations with communist countries or making deals regarding security and military issues.

An indication that several Asian countries have been pursuing interests in the Pacific Islands is presented by Dr. Malama Meleisea, a South Pacific observer from the University of Canterbury in New Zealand. Dr. Meleisea, as quoted by Frank Quimby, said that:

At present, Asian interests [in the Pacific] is reminiscent of the European powers in the mid-19th century--primarily one of exploitative resource extraction. The Pacific islands are going through a geopolitical transition from the sphere of European-American influence to that of Asian influence. What are the political and economic implications for the Pacific island societies of an Asian-controlled Pacific?<sup>71</sup>

Even though Dr. Meleisea is talking about all the Pacific Islands in general, this section of the thesis follows the topic and sticks only to the issues at hand within the Micronesian area of the vast Pacific. The control of other regions in the Pacific by one or more Asian countries deserves just as much consideration as an Asia-controlled Micronesia, but is purposely excluded here because they do not apply to the thesis.

What Dr. Meleisea did not mention is that some of the Asian countries moving into the Pacific Island region are not just interested in marine and other resources there, but are

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<sup>71</sup>Dr. Malama Meleisea's statement quoted by Frank Quimby in the Summer 1993 issue of the *Continental's Pacifica*. Dr Meleisea is the Director of the Macmillan Brown Centre for Pacific Studies at the University of Canterbury in New Zealand, and Frank Quimby is a veteran observer of Micronesian affairs.



also very much interested in monitoring Western activities, gathering information, and of course, analyzing the intentions of the countries involved. How else can one explain the presence of Chinese fishing fleets during the off-season of the species of fish they are after in the waters around Guam, Saipan, Chuuk, Kwajalein, Bikini, Enewetak, and other islands in Micronesia? These fishing vessels only have licenses to fish for certain species of the tuna family and others that are usually located elsewhere, yet the Chinese fishing fleets still hang around.

Kwajalein Atoll is home to one of the United States Missile Tracking Stations and the smaller islands around it serve as target reference points for the practice missiles that are launched from the continental United States at the Vandenberg Air Force Base in California. The United States Army-Kwajalein Atoll (USAKA) oversees the military activities that protect the American interests there and provides support to the overall American national security policy for the region. This activity alone could be the reason for the Chinese vessels' presence in the waters around the Marshall Islands and throughout Micronesia. But it is also not easy to prove whether the Chinese ships have or lack the capability to collect and analyze these types of information.

The issues raised so far could perhaps be understood only if the United States utilizes its assets of satellites and other advanced systems as well as its human sources. However, even without sophisticated means, one could still gain an understanding of the current trend of Asian interests in Micronesia by looking at the historical ties and connections the islanders have with many Asians.

### **1. Asian Connections and Operations in Micronesia up to World War II**

An examination of the islands' ties with the economic giants to their west as well as with those that are not as well off, is crucial in understanding the vulnerability of Guam, the CNMI, RO, FSM, and RMI to fall victim to and be under the control of one or more Asian countries. One must understand, however, that this control does not necessarily have to be political or military in nature. It could very well be economic, where not only are the islands going to be critically and owingly entangled with, but the

United States will be as well. On the other hand, the islands might become better off with an affiliation with an Asian country, especially if that affiliation includes a bonafide promise to develop the islands. This, obviously, would become a very controversial topic of discussion in Washington if the island nations, given their freedom and flexibility, pursue such a concept.

The Micronesians' origins are from Asia with documented historical evidence of them having links with the Tartars who were from as far as Central Asia. The Asian background of the Micronesians include Indo-Malay, Filipino, Chinese, and Japanese, which makes them known today as Asian-Pacific Islanders.<sup>72</sup>

## **2. The Asian "Cultural-DNA" Among Micronesians**

During business ventures with the natives, the Tartars, and later the Europeans, inter-married with the indigenous peoples. Although very uncommon, there were times when women were exchanged for needed goods. Naturally, these acts resulted in offspring of different racial mixtures. But even with all these, the Asian "Cultural-DNA"<sup>73</sup> of the Micronesians remained intact. The natives in the first place were Asians who settled in the islands and had only altered their lifestyles to adapt to the island environment. With the arrival of foreigners, however, the Europeans in particular, the Asian Cultural-DNA was at risk of being altered. The Spaniards, more so than the Portuguese, almost decimated the indigenous people of Micronesia with diseases they brought with them, as well as with their more powerful manifest weapons which were used to kill most of the native men.

Nevertheless, even up to now it is still evident that the Asian Cultural-DNA is present among many Micronesians and other islanders in the region. However, it is far from being similar to the ones found in the 16th, 17th, 18th, and early 19th Centuries.

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<sup>72</sup>Refer to Chapters I and II of this thesis for more details about the origins of the Micronesians.

<sup>73</sup>"Cultural-DNA" is a new term sometimes used by sociologists to link a group of people to its ethnic origins. Some even argue that the "Cultural-DNA" helps explain why people of mixed ethnic origins behave the way they do.

During the 200 to 300 years of Spanish colonial rule, many of the islanders were "Hispanicized." There are more natives now on the islands with European last names than anything else. What little Asian Cultural-DNA left was regenerated, expanded, and continued by the colonial laborers and helpers that were brought to Micronesia by the Spanish and German administrators and soldiers.

During the 200 to 300 years of genocide under the Spanish administration, the colonial power employed thousands of Filipinos to help control the Micronesians. Then, many more arrived as economic migrants or simply to join their families that had already established themselves on the islands. As time passed, numerous intermarriages between the Filipinos and the remaining natives occurred. The closeness between the Filipinos and the natives helped regenerate a dying "Asian-ness" among the islanders. But there were still many parts of Micronesia in which the Filipino influence did not prevail. The places where the number of Filipinos kept rising included the Northern Marianas and Guam.

When the Spanish-American War ended in 1898, many Filipinos on Guam were allowed to stay behind and live there. Besides, their immediate family members knew only Guam and had very little contact with other more distant relatives in the Philippines. The Americans, having annexed both the Philippines and Guam, made no attempt to ship the Filipinos on Guam back to the Philippines. Several Americans wanted to keep these Filipinos back because they thought that they were more skillful and hardworking than the natives and were handy around the work places such as the ship repair facilities and construction projects that were needed for the new U.S. naval administration of the island.

On Guam today, approximately 25 percent of the population are Filipinos. Many of the native Chamorros have some Filipino blood ties. Those born on Guam possessing both Chamorro and Filipino blood prefer to call themselves Guamanians instead of Chamorro or Filipino. But those that are proud to identify themselves with their ethnic background, call themselves one or the other, mostly after the ethnicity of the father. For example, if the father is Filipino, then the child would most likely call himself a Filipino, and if the father is Chamorro, then the child would consider himself a Chamorro. To

many of them, however, the father's ethnicity does not matter any more, but rather the culture and language that are most influential in their upbringing.

Those who consider themselves native Chamorros still resemble the people of Malaysia and Indonesia with a very obvious twist of Hispanic blood in them. Many of them now, are also part Chinese, Japanese, or Korean.

On the German islands of Micronesia, after having purchased them from Spain, the German administration, too, allowed the Filipinos already living there to stay behind and help the new administrators communicate and deal with the natives in the same way the Americans did on Guam. Like the Americans, the Germans thought that the Filipino workers were useful to have around.

But, unlike on Guam, where the Filipinos were later allowed to travel back and forth to the Philippines, sometimes on a regular basis, the ones on the German islands had difficulty in trying to make even one trip during the entire fifteen years of the German administration there. Therefore, maintaining ties with relatives in their Asian homeland rarely occurred, if ever.

If they wanted to visit their relatives in the Philippines, the Filipinos on the German islands had to make a special trip to Guam, and catch one of the ships that would sail to the orient.

To contact their relatives, they could also send out telegraphs and letters, but there was no guarantee that those would reach their destinations, and if they did, it would most likely be months and even years later. Another common way to maintain contacts was through the people who frequented the Philippines. Among them were those sailors who befriended some of the Filipinos and would carry messages for them.

### **3. The Filipino Economic Migrants**

There were several waves of Filipino migrants to the Micronesian Islands. As described above, the earlier ones took place during the Spanish administration from the 16th through the 19th Centuries when the Spanish brought them to the islands as soldiers and laborers. The later migration was a lot different from the earlier ones. Where the

early Filipino migrations included darker skinned, Southeast Asian-type people, many of the later ones had lighter skin color and were perhaps of Chinese origin.

During the U.S. naval administration of the island of Guam in 1899, many sailors and officers stationed there had Filipinos working for them. Many of these Filipinos later were allowed to bring more of their families, sometimes the entire family, to live with them on the island. Unable to live decent lives with the little money they made from their American employers, some of the Filipinos were attracted to easy-money making scams and illegal drug and firearm trafficking. Later, some found themselves making more money by adding prostitution activities to their illegal businesses and eventually grew to become prominent businessmen. Of course, not all of them were involved in the Filipino Connection. And there were also a lot of clean and honest Filipinos that worked hard and saved a lifetime's earning. Today, some of the children of these Filipinos, who are also devout Catholics, participate in the highest levels of the islands' governments, professional, and business sectors. Thousands of Filipinos today travel back and forth from their homelands to Guam and many other islands in Micronesia. Many of them now own land and major businesses, including a garment factory on the island of Saipan, and construction companies throughout Micronesia. But drugs, firearms, illegal aliens, and prostitution sponsored by the Filipino Connection are still rampant, especially on the big tourist islands of Guam, Saipan, Belau, and parts of Chuuk in the Federated States of Micronesia.

One wonders, however, whether these activities constitute a threat to the United States national security or not. Many seem to think that if it is only the Filipinos involved, then it is not even something to be concerned about because the island natives are related to them and the problem should be handled internally. No one is sure, however, whether these are proxy operations hosted by a number of larger and stronger organizations or perhaps a combination of all of them. Is it possible that the Japanese mafia, or "Yakuza," is deeply involved in these activities with the Filipino Connection? Or is the Filipino Connection operating independently? With the little information available on the subject, one can only assume that the organizations hosting all these illegal activities are operating

on their own, and are most likely competing with each other. Besides, it is very unlikely for a homogenous society like Japan to be cooperating and jointly doing this type of operation with the Filipinos, unless the Japanese Yakuza gets "more bang for its bucks."

#### **4. The 19th and 20th Century Japanese, The Japanese Imperial Forces, and The Yakuza in Micronesia: A New Form of Re-Asianization**

Another Asian group that had settled in the islands during the Spanish era were the Japanese. The Japanese first arrived in Micronesia as merchants during the Spanish colonial period. By the latter part of the 19th Century, there were already Japanese businesses on the islands of Guam and Saipan. Although their number was relatively small compared to the Filipinos, these Japanese were prominent businessmen who owned ships and were allowed to export tropical goods to Japan and import Japanese goods into the islands. The business ventures were so successful that the Spaniards authorized these Japanese to increase their activities. Other than on Guam, after the Spanish-American War, the Japanese business success on the islands of Micronesia continued on through the German administration and of course, through the Japanese colonial rule after the First World War. Some American intelligence officials have often wondered if these same Japanese businessmen had spied for the Japanese government prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor and the Japanese capture of Guam and the Philippines.

Years before the attack on Pearl Harbor, the Japanese had acquired more than enough territory and information on the vast Pacific area. For three decades, they prepared their Micronesian colonies for war and as "stepping stones" to Hawaii. Some Japanese war plans had also included these islands as stepping stones all the way to the North American continent. Exactly how they got the data, is still being researched and debated over. Nevertheless, they must have been very detailed in their efforts to neutralize the American fleet at the outset of the Pacific war. Little did they know, however, that the United States was to regain its strength in less than four years and settle the dispute once and for all.

Between the end of World War II and the end of the Vietnam conflict, Japan kept a low profile in dealing with the Micronesian Islands, including Guam and the Northern Marianas, partly because of the restrictions imposed on it by the United States and partly because Japan was still preoccupied with its internal affairs. Another reason that caused Japan to conduct very little activity with its former colonies was the animosity it left behind as a result of the cruel and militant treatment of the natives on some of these island.

The Japanese felt very embarrassed about their brutal treatment of the people involved, and apologized for it almost every chance they got.<sup>74</sup> It was only recently that Japan slowed down their apologies, especially after Malaysia's Prime Minister Muhamad Mahathir had told the Japanese Foreign Minister to stop apologizing and move forward to becoming a "normal" nation.<sup>75</sup>

It has only been in the past twenty years that the Japanese government started to be more involved in the islands. At first, the only involvement was tourism. Later, businesses, mostly in the service sector to support the booming tourist industry, started to grow. These businesses grew so large that they required political support, guidance, and influence, thus the requirement for formal policies between the Japanese and insular governments throughout Micronesia.

Japanese policies toward the two American territories namely Guam and the CNMI, as in the past forty years has had to go through the Washington bureaucracy. This is because the island territories are still under the U.S. sovereignty and responsibility especially when dealing with foreign countries and the islands' security and defense matters.

Japanese policies toward the island nations of Micronesia, however, require only courtesy notification from Tokyo to Washington because these islands are now

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<sup>74</sup>"Dutch World War II Victims to Sue Japan," *The Hague, Netherlands (AP), Marianas Variety News and Views*, vol. 22, no. 149, 8 October 1993, p. 40.

<sup>75</sup>Malaysia's Prime Minister Muhamad Mahathir met in 1993 with Japan's Foreign Minister and while discussing Japanese-Malaysian relations and other issues, Mahathir gave him the awakening advice to stop apologizing for its war mistreatments.

independent. The purpose of the notification is only a gesture and to indicate that nothing military is being conjured. This notification, however, is sometimes viewed as a required report based on agreements between the island nations and the United States.

As long as it is responsible for defense against external threats, and when dealing with some non-democratic countries, the United States retains the right to intervene, monitor, and even control if necessary, the international affairs of the islands, especially when it comes to security matters.<sup>76</sup> Because of this, very little political interaction has taken place directly between the governments of the Micronesian Islands and Japan.

The Japanese, however, were able to gain access to their former colonies after years of negotiations with both the United States and the island governments. Most recently, as of 1 January 1995, almost fifty years after it surrendered the islands, the Japanese government opened up its long-awaited embassy in the FSM and formalized diplomatic relations.<sup>77</sup> The same is in the planning stages for the RMI and ROB.

Before these latest ties with Micronesia, in the early 1970s, some of those Japanese who left behind family members after the war, were able to return to the islands to visit their relatives after almost 25 years of not being able to contact them.<sup>78</sup> Some of them stayed on the islands long enough to restrengthen their bonds with their families, establish business contacts, and get a network started for future business endeavors. Many of the influential locals were involved in the deals and are still part of what has become a huge network.

As mentioned earlier, some Japanese were already on the islands even before the turn of the 20th Century while most of the islands were still under the Spanish

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<sup>76</sup>The United States is also responsible for protecting the resources within the islands' 200 exclusive economic zones. This responsibility was made a permanent one as of November 3, 1986 for the FSM and RMI when the United States approved the compacts of free association with the islands' governments and when President Ronald Reagan signed the Proclamation to terminate the TTPI. The case with the ROB did not happen until the latter part of 1994, making it the last of the "strategic trusts."

<sup>77</sup>Gene Ashby, "50 Years after War's End Japan Establishes Embassy," *Pacific Magazine*, vol. 20, no. 2, Honolulu: Pacific Magazine Corporation, March/April 1995, p. 14.

<sup>78</sup>Those left behind by their Japanese families were mostly the native wives and daughters. Most of the Japanese fathers and their sons were the ones that were forced to go back to their homelands in Japan.



administration. Later, during the short German period, the Japanese made favorable deals with the officials of that administration. Then, at the end of World War I, Japan, recognized as victor of the war, easily won possession of the islands of Micronesia, excluding Guam.

The outbreak of World War II in the Pacific Theater on December 8, 1941 (Guam time) and December 7, (Hawaii time), resulted in the Japanese capture of the Philippines and Guam, adding them to the Tokyo Empire while only neutralizing the American naval base and other facilities on Oahu.<sup>79</sup>

Japan, wanting to improve the Asian/Pacific region with its "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere" program annexed many islands in the region as well as chunks of real estate on the Asian continent, mainly China and portions of Southeast Asia. The Japanese government tried to be diplomatically smart in its goal to Japanize all the areas it added to its empire. In some areas Japan was successful, but in others, it created an unforgivable amount of animosity, many Asians and Pacific Islanders still hold against the Japanese. These people include Chinese, Burmese, Malaysians, and Filipinos along with some Indonesians, Melanesians, and of course Micronesians.

According to John J. Stephan, the political relationship that Japan would have had with each of the countries involved in the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere would fall in one of the following categories: (1) territories to be incorporated into the Japanese Empire; (2) autonomous regions under Japanese protection; (3) independent countries closely tied to Japan by economic and defense agreements; and (4) independent countries linked to Japan by economic ties only.<sup>80</sup> Japan took Micronesia into its empire immediately following World War I, but it was during the first part of World War II that it annexed Guam, the Philippines, and later, other Southeast Asian countries as well as parts of Melanesia.

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<sup>79</sup>C.S. Nicholls, ed., "Power: A Political History of the Twentieth Century," (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 91.

<sup>80</sup>John J. Stephan, "Hawaii Under the Rising Sun: Japan's Plans for Conquest After Pearl Harbor," (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1984), p. 80.

Japanese-Micronesian relations date back to the First World War era, but they were not with the Micronesian natives. As in the Spanish era, the Japanese-Micronesian relations during the German era were really between the Japanese and the colonial power. In that period the German administration was losing its control of the islands until it finally collapsed as a result of the war. There was no sign of a strong German military presence on the islands, so it was very easy for the Japanese to move right in and colonize them. Besides, the islands were much closer to Japan compared to the 10,000 mile distance from Germany. The sailing distance in those days was twice as far.<sup>81</sup> At the height of the colonization age, Japan was definitely the right country to possess the Micronesian Islands, not only because of its close proximity, but because Japan was an allied power in the Asia/Pacific region during the war. But, even before World War I, Japan had always wanted to take possession of the islands because it considered them the "little orphans on its doorsteps."

The Japanese made this ambition obvious when they increased their business ventures with the Germans immediately after the Germans bought the islands from Spain.<sup>82</sup> Some people actually believed that the Japanese had planned to annex the islands during the Spanish administration when that colonial power showed signs of weakness while in control of the islands. These people believed that the Japanese plan was not dreamed up at the beginning of the Second World War, but that it was actually a long term vision the Japanese had of the islands.

As soon as it gained control of the islands, Japan wasted no time in making its colonial policies known. The policies included: (1) to develop the islands economically to the fullest extent; (2) to use the islands as a means of relieving population pressures in Japan; (3) to spread Japanese culture throughout the islands through education and related

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<sup>81</sup>Political Map of the World, 1 June 1983.

<sup>82</sup>Carl Heine, "Micronesia at the Crossroads: A Reappraisal of the Micronesian Political Dilemma," (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1974), p. 14.

methods; and (4) to establish offensive military, naval and air bases in preparation for war.<sup>83</sup>

It should be noted that just because the Japanese settled in great numbers on the Micronesian Islands immediately after World War I, it does not mean that there was actually a relationship between the native governments and Tokyo. The natives of Micronesia had no power or voice on their own land. On the islands, everything was turning "Japanese." In fact, it is perhaps more accurate to say that everything was turning "Asian" because there were more Okinawans, Koreans, and Filipinos than indigenous people living on the islands, especially on the six major ones of the Japanese colonies namely Saipan, Palau (Belau), Yap, Truk (Chuuk), Ponape (Pohnpei), and Majuro. Again, many of these people were brought to the islands as laborers for the Japanese empire.<sup>84</sup>

Because of the enormous number of foreigners, although not felt by the colonizers, the emotional impact on the natives was tremendous as their values were transformed from European and Western ideals to Asian. There were thousands of Okinawan and Korean laborers and family members throughout Micronesia. On Guam, where the American Navy was in control, several prominent Filipino workers and their families were still being employed by the Navy and other American families stationed there. Because of the great number of Asian workers, the natives were ranked as second-class citizens and usually treated worse than the imported laborers. On Guam, from the time that the Japanese seized it from the Americans until the Americans recaptured it, the Japanization process

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<sup>83</sup>Yanaihara Tadao, "Pacific Islands Under Japanese Mandate," (New York: Oxford University Press, 1940), p. 68.

<sup>84</sup>As alluded earlier, there are now twice as many foreign laborers as island natives living on Saipan. Eventually, it will be that way throughout Micronesia if the island leaders become too liberal with their immigration and labor policies. This is an issue that makes California's Proposition 187 trivial at best when compared to Saipan's problem which impacts heavily on the social and cultural aspects of the islanders' lifestyles. Once these laborers, domestic helpers, maids, and farmers gain support to voice their opinions on government policies, their impact on the political arena will be interesting to observe and compare with the situation that took place on the South Pacific Island of Fiji where there are more people from India than natives of the island. On Fiji today, those people of Indian ethnicity have already become citizens of the island nation and face racial problems that have even escalated to the level of *coup d'état*.

was short, but harsh, resulting in some cases with the beheading of natives and island officials. But in the rest of Micronesia, it took three decades, from 1914 through 1944, before the Japanization process ceased.

The Japanization process in these islands only stopped with the help of the United States military during the Second World War and after the United States' armed forces captured the entire Micronesian area, and sent almost all the Japanese and their followers back to their countries. The United States, as the administrator under the United Nations, helped the natives get rid of the harsh social and emotional impact suffered, and gradually brought back the familiar Western values.

A scary thought being spread around in the islands today is the idea that some Japanese still feel that they do not need any formal policies between them and the island governments because they believe that the islands are still rightfully their's and that the United States is only there as it was in Japan during its post-World War II occupation. Furthermore, the same rumor has it that the Japanese will once again gain control of the islands, if not financially by the end of this century, then militarily in the next.

Japan has contributed millions of dollars in grants and other forms for the islands' economic and infrastructural development. It has also purchased fishing rights in the waters of Micronesia. Japan for example, recently purchased a fishing license from the RMI. The two nations also signed "a new and more generous fishing agreement." The agreement raised the original payment of \$1 million to \$3 million a year for a tuna fishing license to allow Japan to fish within the RMI's 200 mile exclusive economic zone (EEZ). Because the islanders have yet to come up with sizable fishing and canning industries for themselves, they make their money off the marine resources mostly by selling licenses to other countries to fish within their EEZs.<sup>85</sup>

As mentioned earlier, Japan has contributed enormously in foreign aid to the island nations in the Pacific, "sometimes to the point of absurdity, building hospitals that the locals cannot (even) staff." Along with all the other reasons to contribute, Japan also

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<sup>85</sup>"Japan Fishes for Pacific Friends," *The Economist*, 27 November 1993, p. 41.

"feels a sense of responsibility to the orphans on its doorsteps."<sup>86</sup> For this, the natives are very appreciative. But, nevertheless, there are still many who say, "It is about time the Japanese start paying us for the way they treated and robbed us during their slavery administration here."<sup>87</sup>

Will there be a another Japanese superpower in the near future? Will Japan remilitarize to the level it was during the early years of WW II? And, will it be strong enough to hold on to the territories it would seize if that would be its intent? Obviously, it would take a whole thesis to research the answers to these questions. But with the information currently available about Japan, one can easily agree that the likelihood is very slim.

Japan is critical about its current defense build up. Many Japanese feel that they do not need a military. In fact, some of these same people are hoping that the American military will pull out of Japan like it did in the Philippines, but only without Mt. Fuji exploding on them, like the Mt. Pinatubo eruption in the Philippines.

Some elites in Japan, however, wish that they could be powerful again and be able to balance against any power, or simply become a major international role player, maybe even as a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). By having a veto power in the UNSC, Japan can better protect itself, and its assets and interests abroad.

But still, there are some other Japanese who wish for the United States to continue its military operations in the region, because it has accomplished more than it was originally designed to do. Among its other accomplishments, the United States military presence in the region served successfully in terms of regional stability, containment of the former Soviet Union, prevention of a rogue country to emerge as a hegemonic power in

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<sup>86</sup>Ibid.

<sup>87</sup>From a conversation with a Saipanese man now living on Guam. His name is Mr. Segundo L.G. Blas, a famous craftsman and wood carver from the village of Mangilao. This gentleman, an uncle of the author, lived through the last two decades of the Japanese administration and through World War II in Micronesia. The author lived with him for almost two years between 1977 and 1979 in which time the conversations took place.

the East Asia/Pacific area, and of course the prevention of the Japanese military force to reemerge as an uncontrollable power in the region.

The natives of Micronesia today, enjoy the business they have with the Japanese, and will definitely improve their contracts for more reciprocal gains. In fact, if it were not for many of the business interactions between the countries, the Micronesian Islands would still be relying solely on and perhaps even begging for more dollars from their protector, the United States. The Japanese contributions were able to improve some of the islands' infrastructure, from roads to health clinics and even power plants<sup>88</sup> and airports. No doubt the Japanese also benefit from their own overseas foreign aid to the islands. For example, the Japanese tourists who dominate the use of air travel when touring Micronesia, enjoy landing on airfields their own money helped build or improve.

It would be unfair to conclude this section without citing a passage from John Ravenhill's "No Longer An American Lake?" In 1989, Ravenhill said:

In the economic realm, Japan could usefully take the lead in promoting "Western" interests. Over the last decade, Japan's assistance to the South Pacific Islands has grown fivefold to over \$25 million annually. But this is only one percent of its total overseas aid. Japan already provides significantly more assistance to the region than the United States.<sup>89</sup>

## **5. Yakuza And Others Defined: Threats Or Not?**

When one writes or talks about Yakuza activities and other covert operations in far away places and describes their linkages to the United States and its policies, a reader or listener will almost certainly think about those famous Tom Clancy novels. In fact, one of the islands covered in this paper is also mentioned in the latest Tom Clancy novel, "Debt In Honor." But where Clancy's depiction of the island of Saipan is fiction, this

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<sup>88</sup>"Upgrading Pohnpei Power Plant," *The National Union*. An Official Publication of the People of the Federated States of Micronesia. vol. 14, no. 4, (Palikir: Office of the President and Office of Information, FSM Government), p. 4.

<sup>89</sup>John Ravenhill, ed., *"No Longer An American Lake?: Alliance Problem in the South Pacific,"* (Berkeley: Institute of International Studies, 1989), p. 218.

thesis describes some of the actual activities taking place on that island as well as on the other Micronesian Islands, including Guam and the former Trust Territory islands that were under the United States administration for many years.

The Yakuza organization is the Japanese version of the "mafia" that has penetrated almost every sector of the Japanese society from the street gangs in Tokyo to the high posts in Japan's political structure. The Yakuza, also known as "organized crime" has gone further underground since Japan has passed new tough crime laws to control criminal activities. These crime laws cover areas such as firearms, swords, and drugs. The laws, however, will not entirely stop the gangs which have organized themselves as businesses with boards and chairmen,<sup>90</sup> while also having members in the government sector. It has been estimated that membership in the Yakuza has reached 90,000 with annual revenues of up to \$50 billion.<sup>91</sup> The thing to note is that there could be even more members of this organization, including prominent people in the society, that are influential enough to have even the police keep a blind eye on their activities.

The Yakuza is shifting even as Japan's political landscape transforms. A 1991 law and the collapse of the 1980s "bubble" economy have forced gangs to consolidate. The three largest ones had 25 percent of the official gang members in 1989. Today the three have at least 65 percent. 1992 was the year when the first indications of the growing strength of the Yakuza appeared. In that year, the Kobe-based Yamaguchi-gumi forged bonds with other groups in the Kansai region. In another region of Japan, the two largest Kanto-based gangs merged also.<sup>92</sup>

In 1991, President Bush's brother, Prescott, was linked to the Yakuza as "an unknowing middleman for West Tsusho, a Tokyo-based real estate firm run by the

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<sup>90</sup>"Tycoons of Crime: Japan," *The Economist*, February 29, 1992, vol. 322, no. 7748, p. 36.

<sup>91</sup>Tom Ormonde, "Cracking Down on the 'Yakuza'," *World Press Review*, May 1992, vol. 39, no. 5, p. 48.

<sup>92</sup>Jonathan Friedland, "Underworld Mergers," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, August 12, 1993, vol. 156, no. 32, p. 19.

Japanese mafia."<sup>93</sup> But, most recently, the media has reduced its coverage and has been reluctant to announce that there have been indications of influence of organized crime within large Japanese corporations and within the political structures of that country. Perhaps, this is partly because the "annual meetings are (now) quiet as the mob stays home in Japan."<sup>94</sup> Contrary to this observation, however, is the fact that the activities still continue and has even spread to the U.S. territories of Guam and the Northern Marianas, despite the "quiet meetings" in Tokyo. Many believe that these meetings are now being held on the more remote islands of the Pacific. The members use the tourist, real estate, and golf course industries as their covers. One of James Sterngold's observations of the latest conspiracies by the Yakuza shows that the organization also uses its banking connections as a cover. In that observation, Sterngold concludes that "gangster ties to banks hurt Japan's financial recovery."<sup>95</sup>

Other Asian covert activities include the small, but effective "Chinese Connections." One of the organization's female members was involved with damaging the reputation of a former Guamanian governor, whom was accused of being an adulterer and womanizer when he messed around with this Chinese woman; she consequently "took him for a ride" for thousands of his hard-earned dollars. The "Korean Connection," more popularly known by many of its observers as the "Kim-Chee Connection," along with the others, are big on bribery and prostitution operations in the American territories of Guam and Saipan. The prostitution services on these islands cater not only to the visiting Japanese and Australian tourists, but also to the American sailors, airmen, and marines that are stationed or on temporary duty there. The number of Filipinos on the islands may be large, sometimes doubling that of the natives, but there is very little known about their operations or whether they are linked to the Filipino Tribal Guerrillas in the Philippines.

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<sup>93</sup>"My Brother, the Middleman," *Time*, June 24, 1991, vol. 137, no. 25, p. 25.

<sup>94</sup>Andrew Pollack, "Annual Meetings Are Quiet as the Mob Stays Home in Japan," *The New York Times*, June 30, 1994, vol. 143, pC20(N), pD9(L), col.1, (10 col. in).

<sup>95</sup>James Sterngold, "Gangster Ties to Banks Hurt Japan's Financial Recovery," *The New York Times*, October 18, 1994, vol. 144, pC1(N), pD1(L), col.1, (24 col. in).



However, the "Filipino Connection" operations that are open and well known have been made legal on some of these islands. These are those gambling, lotteries, and cock-fighting activities that no doubt add to the islands' revenues as well as to some government officials' accounts. The Filipino drug trafficking and prostitution activities are very covert, but are sometimes cracked by even the local police. Are there scandalous activities taking place in our own territories that we know very little to nothing about? How can we tap into these problematic organizations and cut off their supply and networking lines? The beginning of these Asian operations and their problems can probably be linked back to the original inhabitants of the islands in the Western Pacific.

#### **6. Asian Legacies in Micronesia and the Arrival of Modern Filipinos**

After World War II, the victorious Americans allowed many family members of the Asian workers to stay in Micronesia instead of going back to their homeland since most of them had spent almost thirty years on the islands and did not wish to return. However, those Japanese soldiers and their families who were captured before committing harikiri, an honorable Japanese-style suicide by stabbing oneself with a special Samurai sword, or before leaping to their deaths off cliffs, were forced to go back to Japan. Many of them who had native wives and children only took their sons with them, leaving their daughters and wives behind. Some of these women later remarried and named their new children after those that had left them. Some of the daughters also named their children after their fathers and brothers in order to keep the memories of their lost loved ones intact--a legacy that will last a very long time.

After almost thirty years with little or no contact, in the early 1970s, many of the relatives were able to visit one another in their respective homelands. Many Japanese men who had relatives in Micronesia returned to re-establish and restrengthen their family ties. Those Micronesians who could afford the travel fares went to Japan to visit those who could not return to Micronesia. This practice of maintaining ties with relatives in the two separate countries is still going on today.

In the case of the Filipinos on Guam, almost immediately after the American recapture of the island, there was a new batch of migrant workers coming from the Philippines in order to work on the war-devastated island. These new Filipinos arrived by the hundreds. Most of them were escorted by American service men who employed them in the Philippines and wanted to continue their employment at their new station. Some of them were spouses of the sailors and airmen who at one time or another had served in the Philippines. Some of them had family members already living on Guam. Those that did not have family on Guam, had to make all the necessary arrangements, from visas to housing, before the rest of their family arrived.

#### **7. The Latest Migrations and Settlements of Asians in Micronesia**

The latest Asian migrations coming into Micronesia range from refugees and imported laborers, to tourists who, for some reason found it hard to return to their homelands. Many of these new migrants found loopholes in the immigration and naturalization systems and were able to become citizens of the islands where they were welcome. Some of them have even become American citizens through the same loopholes.

Though not every Asian migrant does it, through inter-marriages, an American husband or wife for example, could sponsor his or her spouse to become a United States citizen. Some of these new citizens now live in the United States. But, many are still living in the American territories of Guam and the Northern Marianas in order to remain close to their place of origin, where they still have family members.

Some of the richer ones simply bought their way into becoming citizens of the islands where they wished to settle and pursue business ventures and other career opportunities. These same Asian migrants chose not to become American citizens in order to avoid paying any form of American tax, or fall under the jurisdiction of the American legal system. They also did not want to lose their immigrant status immunity. For example, if one of them committed a crime, he would not be tried under the American system, but simply be deported to his homeland, only to buy his way back again later.

Through these and other loopholes in the immigration and naturalization systems, the number of Japanese, Okinawans, Koreans, and Filipinos living on Guam, the Northern Marianas, and throughout Micronesia have increased tremendously since the political status of most of these islands changed from the United States Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands to the current ones. The number of immigrant workers alone in the Northern Marianas, is twice that of the natives.

Another form of migration into the Micronesian region is through the fishing industries. The Japanese, South Koreans, Chinese, and Taiwanese are all working their way into Micronesia-- at first only to fish the waters and return, but, recently, each of these countries have begun negotiations to open fish transport, storage, and canning facilities on the islands. Although the projects may be perceived as excellent for the islands' economic growth, the necessary steps to prevent capital flight and social conflicts from occurring have yet to be worked out in detail. Some of the proposals included bringing in more foreign workers to offset the lack of skilled human resources on the islands.

The most obvious of all the Asian-ness coming into Micronesia today is in the form of tourists. Tourism is one of the largest growing industries in Micronesia with the total number of visitors sometimes reaching up to 300,000 a year on one island alone. Most of the tourists that vacation in Micronesia are Japanese, followed by Koreans, and then a combination of other Asians. Many of these visitors stay on the islands of Guam and Saipan for a weekend excursion paid for by their employers and companies as rewards and incentives.

Many of the younger visitors go to Micronesia to dive the reefs and wrecks scattered around the islands, enjoy the tropical warm water and weather, or simply to enjoy the night life there, or to shop around for American products that are hard to obtain in Japan. Many of these younger tourists go to the islands also to experiment with the latest drugs on the market, because not only are the drugs cheaper there, they are also easier to obtain than in Japan or any other place close to it. As many as ten to fifteen

times a year, some of these tourists return to the islands where they can almost freely consume the drugs of their choice.

In light of these observations, many Pacific Island watchers have concluded that the United States have not only lost a huge chunk of the "American Lake," but have already lost the whole Micronesian region to the growing Asian tourism and fishing industries.

#### **8. Current Asian Interests in Micronesia versus American Interests in the Region**

Will there be a new "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere" that will stretch out into the Pacific to as far as the Marshall Islands in the former TTPI? Do any of the East Asian countries have economic, strategic, or ulterior interests in the Micronesian region? If so, which one is it, and where exactly are its islands of interest? Perhaps only by looking into one's crystal ball can the answers to these questions be reached. Because of the ineffectiveness of this method, and the lack of material on the subject, the following are only perceptions of the current trends of the Asian interests in Micronesia.

The Japanese are dominating the overseas development assistance to the islands while the other Asian countries are more interested in exploiting the natural resources in the region. But, the Chinese, however, seem to be interested not only in the fish around Micronesia, but also in establishing diplomatic ties and monitoring events, especially those of Western countries that operate within and around the Micronesian waters.

When the Chinese, for example, buy fishing licenses to fish the waters off the Marshall Islands, they are also interested in surveying the American activities there. How else can one explain the lengthy periods of time that the Chinese fishing vessels spend around the Kwajalein and Enewetak Atolls, even during the known off-season periods for the skipjack tuna that they purchased the licenses for? But one can easily notice, however, that no matter what the ulterior motives are, the economic and other development assistance that each country provides, outweigh those unknown ulterior interests that may or may not exist.

Of course, the same can be said about the American interests in Micronesia. But one wonders exactly what are our interests there especially now that the cold war is over. Some believe that there is an ambiguity of American interests in these islands which seems more like a dilemma: to develop the islands toward self-government and eventually independence while the other is to annex the islands for our use toward our own strategic security purposes. In the past fifty years, the United States has been conducting a little bit of both in order to satisfy the differences of interests between the State, Interior, and Defense Departments. As in any of our American foreign policies, there are self-interests and of course the promotion of ideology, both of which are not absent in our Micronesian policy.

#### **9. Asian Economic Aid versus United States Aid**

The combined direct and indirect Asian economic aid to Micronesia, contrary to popular belief, has not exceeded nor even come close to being equal to the total economic aid that the United States has provided. But as far as investments are concerned, the Asian countries have exceeded those of Americans'.

Some officials within the United States Federal Government, however, are glad to see that there are other countries that are interested in contributing to the development and welfare of these islands and their inhabitants, even through investments. These Asian countries' investments have helped ease the burden of the U.S. Federal Government. Now the United States can concentrate its efforts and redirect funds that would normally go to the Micronesian Island nations to other countries like Russia, Somalia, Rwanda, Burundi, and others that are much more in need of assistance and those that we are trying to win over.

But still, many officials, especially those in the U.S. Department of the Interior, specifically in the Office of Territorial and International Affairs<sup>96</sup> that are charged to help

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<sup>96</sup>During the writing of this thesis, the OTIA was scheduled to be abolished at the end of this fiscal year (FY-95) as a result of a legislation sponsored by Rep. Elton Gallegly (R-Calif.), chairman of the House Subcommittee on Native Americans and Insular Affairs. See Appendix A for more information about the

develop these islands, are unhappy about the idea of their budget being rerouted. They may be left with very few assets to continue the insular development programs and the goodwill relations with the Micronesian Island nations and the United States territories in the region.

#### **10. Prospects for an Asian-Controlled Micronesia**

Many people are convinced that the Micronesian Islands could easily become "Mini-Dragons"<sup>97</sup> like their Asian neighbors west of them. This, however, is believed to be possible only if one or more of the prominent "Asian Miracles" control them or simply provide the necessary assistance. In their view, these islands could very well become "Asian economic havens," like the British-style economic havens in the Cayman Islands. Once equal to or close to being Mini-Dragons, and considering their geographical location, these islands may find it easy to be integrated and become full members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)<sup>98</sup> as well as the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation

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OTIA.

<sup>97</sup>The "Mini-Dragons" are Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia. There is also another group nicknamed "Four Tigers" which consists of the Mini-Dragons plus Singapore. Sometimes these countries are confused with the Newly Industrialized Countries (NICs), also known as the Newly Industrialized Economies (NIEs). The latter is used more often now because many countries do not recognize two of the members, Taiwan and Hong Kong, as countries. The other NIE members are South Korea, and Singapore. Where China is "The Dragon," the Mini-Dragons are named as such based on the overseas Chinese efforts that contribute tremendously to the development of the countries involved. Most of these overseas Chinese are citizens of the country they reside in.

<sup>98</sup>The ASEAN countries include the Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, and Brunei. Some of the association's observer-members include Papua New Guinea and Vietnam. Among the association's main goals are the recognition and respect of the other members' sovereignty, cooperation on social, cultural, political, and economic developments within the region, and the gradual and cautious settlement of differences that may arise between two or more members. Contrary to what many people think it is, ASEAN is not a collective security or defense arrangement. Many defense officials and academicians, however, would like ASEAN to develop into one similar to NATO.

(APEC).<sup>99</sup> Furthermore, if these islands cut their ties with and dependency on the United States, they could also qualify for membership in Mahathir's East Asia Economic Caucus (EAEC).<sup>100</sup>

Once the Micronesian Island nations are well off on their own, they or the United States could initiate the termination of the islands' dependency on the U.S. Federal Government for economic aid and security. The United States then could also terminate its control of the islands, transferring responsibility to the Asian countries. Besides, geographically, the Micronesian Islands fall within the Asian region, and the recent trend indicates that Asian countries, more than the United States, are showing more interests in these islands.

### **11. Implications For An Asian-Controlled Micronesia**

The diversity of languages, ethnicities, and cultures in the Micronesian region is reason enough for any country to experience problems in administering and controlling the island nations. There will obviously be difficulties in adjusting to the needs of the islands in every area from education to modernization. The political, economic, social, and cultural repercussions on both the controlling parties and the islands will not be calmly received by either party at first.

Outside of obvious difficulties, the American loss of these islands would play a significant role in the adjustment and redefinition of American national security in the Western Pacific.

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<sup>99</sup>APEC's membership includes eighteen countries within the Asia/Pacific region and its main purpose is to decrease restrictions to free trade in the area. All of its current members share only one thing in common: their shores or borders touch the Pacific Ocean.

<sup>100</sup>EAEC was introduced by Malaysia's Prime Minister, Muhamad Mahathir. It emphasizes efforts for "Modernization," not "Westernization." Mahathir's concept is "Looking to the East" (Japan) instead of the West. EAEC's membership consists of only Asian countries and has recently undergone changes to turn the caucus into a group, giving it more structure and strength over APEC. However, the latest move resulted in making EAEC only a sub-element of APEC.

## 12. A Brief Overview of the History of United States Efforts Countering Asian Operations

The United States Navy on Guam, American Samoa, the Philippines, and Hawaii was the sole military asset in the Pacific area prior to World War II. Guam, from 1914 to 1941 "was like the little lamb surrounded by hungry wolves (Japanese Forces) that could not figure out exactly what to do with it, especially while knowing where the shepherd (U.S. fleet in Hawaii) was and what he might do if they gobbled it up."<sup>101</sup>

After receiving reports that the Japanese were fortifying the Micronesian Islands, the United States initiated some of its non-conventional means of gathering information. On Guam in 1915, the Adkins-Kroll joint venture began its business operations on this Navy-controlled island, "shipping Chevys, collecting copra and spying on the side."<sup>102</sup> A few years later, after careful negotiations with the Japanese, Adkins-Kroll opened up new routes to ship goods to the Japanese-controlled islands in Micronesia. "On the side," and from the sea, David Adkins and Clifton Kroll conducted surveys of the Japanese fortifications that were built on almost all the major islands including Saipan, Koror, Peleliu, Moen, Pohnpei, and many others that were considered by the Japanese as strategically important and could serve as "stepping stones" towards the United States. According to John Wythe White, "the company gathered data in the form of notes,

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<sup>101</sup>These were the words of an old Micronesian Nahnmwarki (chief) who monitored the activities in the region during the Japanese era. The Nahnmwarki recently passed away at his home on the island of Pohnpei where a casual conversation between him and the author took place. A part of the dialogue was about life under the different administrations that colonized Micronesia. The meeting occurred on May 26, 1985. Other topics included the legacies of each colonial power. The Nahnmwarki said that the Spaniards reduced the indigenous population and enlightened the natives with Christianity; the Germans gave them time, 15 years to repopulate, while taking all the copra they wanted, and all the phosphates and other minerals; and the Japanese provided agricultural modernities while enslaving the natives. He went on to comment that the United States gave the natives freedom, democracy, and everything else that would keep them happy and quiet about the the American activities taking place on their islands. But he also said that the natives had so much freedom now that they did not know what to do with it. According to him, the imports of numerous American goods from U.S.D.A. High-Q foods to soda pops got many natives so hooked that they now seem unable to live without these and other American goodies.

<sup>102</sup>John Wythe White, "Shipping Chevys, Collecting Copra and Spying on the Side," *Continental's Pacifica*, Summer 1993, p. 22.



sketches, and photographs for the U.S. Office of Naval Intelligence. The data detailed the progress of the Japanese in developing commercial enterprises, military installations, docks, warehouses, radio communications equipment and crops."<sup>103</sup>

An anthropologist in real life, but also using it as a cover, Willard Price became a famous name in the National Geography magazine prior to the Pearl Harbor incident when he visited several islands in Micronesia and wrote about his work and findings there. On the side, he wrote to government officials about his discoveries of Japanese fortifications, airstrips, and harbors that were clearly signs of war preparations and violations of the C-Mandate regulations of the League of Nations. Price also predicted the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, but he was ridiculed for such predictions.

To verify Price's accounts of the Japanese activities in Micronesia, Amelia Earheart, as part of her challenge to be the first female pilot to fly around the world, was tasked to take secret aerial photos of the Micronesian Islands that would be along her route. According to one account, the famed pilot and her navigator, Fred Noonan, were said to have been forced down by Japanese fighter pilots and transferred to the Saipan Japanese prison. There, the two Americans were said to have been tortured to death.<sup>104</sup> But, since neither their bodies nor pieces of the aircraft have yet been produced, many people are not inclined to believe this theory about the mysterious disappearance of the two famous Americans.

The lack of explanation for the disappearance of these Americans forced the U.S. Navy and other assets to be deployed to the Pacific region where the loss was believed to have taken place. Joining those that were already in the vicinity and had the last radio contact with the pilots, these rescuers attempted to find the downed aviators, but to no

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<sup>103</sup>Ibid.

<sup>104</sup>A few years before she died, the author's grandmother who lived next to the Japanese prison on Saipan during the Japanese administration and prior to WW II, claimed that she saw a Caucasian woman and a Caucasian man being interrogated by Japanese soldiers. She said that after a few hours of torture, the two were hauled away, never to be seen again. She did not say, however, if she saw any American aircraft. There are still World War II survivors on Saipan who claim they saw the American couple in the Japanese prison. The war-torn remains of the prison stand as a major tourist attraction today, but there is still no solid evidence that the two Americans were there.

avail. The search was partially conducted during and after the Pacific war, but still no evidence of the lost couple or its aircraft came up.

### **13. More Peaceful Penetrations into Micronesia: The Asian Way?**

After the war with Japan, the United States developed the islands and occupied them in order to keep other countries from using them again as "stepping stones" to attack the West. The first concern was to prepare for a Japanese remilitarization and reemergence, but after a few years, when indications showed that the Japanese were not about to become a threat again, the United States slowed its development and activities in Micronesia. But on the island of Saipan, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) was operating guerrilla training camps for the Chinese and Tibetan nationalists to prepare for a penetration into mainland China. These operations went on for about thirteen years from 1949 into the early 1960s. Major construction projects were being built on what is now known as Capital Hill on Saipan to house all the CIA personnel involved in the training of these nationalists.

The Chinese nationalists were the same ones that we later ceased to support upon our recognition of the Peoples' Republic of China. Now some of these same people are returning to Saipan not as trainees, but as entrepreneurs and are becoming more prominent than most of the natives. One can only question exactly what these people are prominent in. Are they only prominent in their businesses with the bottling companies and garment industries, or are they also prominent in other areas--their hidden agenda and operations on the Micronesian Islands and our territories?

After a few years without favorable action from the United States government to develop the islands' economy and infrastructure, the natives began to seek support from Asian countries including Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan. Some of the support sought for and provided were inconsistent with the American national security goals for the region.

It has only been in the past twenty years that the Japanese government started to be more involved in the islands since it was forced out of the region at the end of WW II.

At first, the only involvement was tourism. Later, businesses, mostly in the service sector to support the booming tourist industry, started to grow at a fast pace. These businesses increased so much that they required political support and guidance. Influence from even the organized criminals was definitely present in the making of policies and signing of contracts.

The Yakuza's involvement in the tourist industry range from hotel operations, escort and travel services, and golf courses or country club memberships. The organization has also penetrated the real estate areas, paying large sums up front to get favorable deals for long term leases on a prime beach front property, for example. Many more are involved in illegal gambling, drug and firearm trafficking, as well as prostitution that has already established itself into an international ring with participants and customers coming from as far as Russia and Europe.

In this post-Cold War era some of the concerns with the islands are no longer their vulnerability to foreign conquests, but include the infiltration of foreign and illegal activities from mostly Asian mafia-type organizations. The most dominating group is the Japanese Yakuza, followed by a deep underground Filipino Connection that sometimes uses dead baby bodies to transport their drugs in. The Chinese and the Korean Connections also operate deep underground activities and usually deal with how to make big bucks through smuggling high value items and taking advantage of the numerous loopholes in operating their businesses and bringing in illegal aliens, among others. These organizations have contributed to turning Micronesia into a "hub" or the "nexus" of organized criminal activities in the Pacific. To chase and track their members down, one would have to be constantly on the move, perhaps doing daily "island-hoppings" in an area that consists of 2,100 islands and atolls.

#### **14. Outlook for the United States**

Today, more than ever, the United States should invest in efforts to assist the islands in every way possible in order to continue the solid goodwill relationships with them. At the same time, more efforts should be concentrated on monitoring the activities

of the other countries that are gradually penetrating the American territories and the Micronesian Islands.

To counter the illegal activities taking place in Micronesia and on our own territories, the United States needs to upgrade its assets to monitor the operations of the several Asian countries in the region. The United States assets should not only be situated on the respective countries that sponsor these illegal operations, but also on the islands that are being used to hold their gangster meetings and serve as leisure areas for the members of these organizations.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Central Intelligence Agency along with the military assets already in the area should team up in order to track down even those United States citizens that are collaborating with foreign operators. It is understood that many Americans do not agree with this practice, but we must not forget that there are perhaps just as many Americans that want to know just how much of these illegal activities is enough and what are we doing stop them.

While we do have counter-intelligence systems in the region that can easily handle the Pacific situation, the United States should consider utilizing these assets to the fullest. The services they provide must continue to be empowered to stop, or at least curb, the damaging activities that are taking place before the islands are again used as battlegrounds in future Pacific crises.

Some of the Asian state-sponsored information collectors use the organized crime groups as covers for their operations, which also serve as denial methods when compromised or when their lives are at stake. For this same reason, some of our own human assets should look as if they are crooks, too. Of course, this is only one of several ways, and perhaps the riskiest. Certainly, there are other ways that are perhaps better in penetrating the organizations.

The idea of an Asian-controlled Micronesia twenty years ago would be a hard concept to picture. Today, however, the idea is becoming more and more real. All one has to do is walk the streets at Garapan on the island of Saipan, or Tumon Bay on Guam, and one will realize how fast the Asian penetration into the Micronesian region is taking

place. Furthermore, if one is to fly over the islands in the FSM, ROB, and RMI, one would notice the hundreds of Asian fishing vessels practically scooping up the areas' fish to be shipped to Asia. After noticing all the Asian activities occurring in Micronesia, one would wonder, "Who won the war in the Pacific fifty years ago?"

If United States officials are serious about the strategies of engagement and enlargement, and maintaining American values and access rights in the strategically important Micronesian Islands, then they should begin looking for alternatives to an Asian-controlled Micronesia. The American loss of these islands would be significant, and would create a need for major readjustments and redefinition of the American national security in the entire East Asia/Pacific region.

Along with a Japanese-controlled or a Chinese-controlled Micronesia, some of the other possible scenarios are as follows: 1) a Filipino-controlled Micronesia; 2) a Korean-controlled Micronesia; 3) a Taiwanese-controlled Micronesia; 4) a combination of other Southeast Asians with a strong influence in Micronesia; and 5) a combination of Australia, New Zealand, and other South Pacific influence in the Micronesian area.

If the United States reduces its budgets and assets significantly, the Micronesian Islands and American territories in the Western Pacific will most likely drop off the intelligence community's priority agenda. Both the United States and its assets in the territories will suffer the risk of losing the advantage of staying on top of the activities taking place everyday in the Western Pacific region. If many American blunders occur, major exploitation opportunities, even in the fishing, tourism, and service industries, could become more attractive to Asian organized crime groups, from the Yakuza to the Filipino Connection. In a worse case scenario, the islands could even get coerced and fall prey to these covert organizations and eventually be under the full control of the emerging powers in the region.

The United States should no longer consider the islands only as strategic outposts, even though they are. It should, however, begin efforts to help the islands on their way to becoming the "American Mini-Dragons," or the "American Cayman Islands" of the Pacific.

The United States needs to reexamine the value of Micronesia, both as a fundamental factor in providing for the defense of American interests in the East Asia/Pacific region, and as a great opportunity to enter into the most dynamic markets in the world. Furthermore, for both moral and strategic reasons, the United States should enhance its present level of support to the Micronesian Islands, including its territories of Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and their inhabitants as they pursue a better future of peace, quiet, and prosperity. One way for the United States to ensure an increase of its activities in the Micronesian region, is to build on its genuine interest of developing the islands at a pace set by Micronesians and Americans alike. Another way, is to attract the island nations and U.S. territories in Micronesia to pursue a statehood status. If it will not incorporate the islands into the Union as full-fledged members of the American political family, the United States should enhance its support of the natives' long term goals to become responsible international players and sovereign. Whether it grants statehood to the islands, or not, the United States should help them to become self-reliant while maintaining open and honest goodwill relationships with each one of the island nations, and of course, with its territories.

It has been over forty years since James Michener wrote his "Return To Paradise," but his vision then of the vast Pacific has become even clearer today, especially as the Asian economies take on more of the challenges and advantages the islands can offer. Michener's vision, however, will turn out different if the United States does not participate as actively as the Asian countries do in the development of the islands. Referring to the Asian presence in the Pacific, according to Michener, "Asia is everywhere." His vision of the Pacific Ocean and of Asia is best described in his own terms:

There is only one sensible way to think of the Pacific Ocean today. It is the highway between Asia and America, and whether we wish it or not, from now on there will be immense traffic along that highway. If we know what we want, if we have patience and determination, if above all we have understanding, we may insure that the traffic will be peaceful, consisting of tractors and students and medical missionaries and bolts of cloth. But if we are not intelligent, or if we cannot cultivate understanding

in Asia, then the traffic will be armed planes, battleships, submarines and death. In either alternative we may be absolutely certain that from now on the Pacific traffic will be a two-way affair. I can foresee the day when the passage of goods and people and ideas across the Pacific will be of far greater importance to America than the similar exchange across the Atlantic. Asia must inevitably become more important to the United States than Europe. That is why we must all do all that we can to understand Asia. That is why it is stupid folly to look upon the South Pacific as a lecher's paradise or a wastrel's retreat. It has become, especially as it leads to New Zealand and Australia, one of our highways to the future.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>105</sup>Michener, p. 436-437.

## VII. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In its own national interest, the United States needs to reawaken to the value of the Micronesian environment as a fundamental factor in providing for the defense of American interests in the East Asia/Pacific region. For both historical and strategic reasons, the United States should enhance its present level of support to the Micronesian Islands, including its territories of Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and their inhabitants as they pursue a better future of peace, quiet, and prosperity. One way for the United States to ensure an increase of its activities in the Micronesian region, is to build on its genuine interest of developing the islands at a pace set by Micronesians and Americans alike. The United States should also do everything legal and morally correct to attract the people of Micronesia to pursue the statehood option for their future political status. But even if it will not incorporate the islands into the Union as full-fledged members of the American political family, the United States should still enhance its support of the natives' long term goals to become international players, sovereign, and self-reliant, all while maintaining open and honest goodwill relationships with each one of the island nations, and of course, its territories.

In the past few centuries, the Micronesians have experienced numerous and drastic changes in their cultures, economies, and languages, as well as in their overall social lifestyles and their political outlook for the future. These experiences have altered their views of the world in many ways. Some Micronesians today see the rest of the world as too fast for them, unsafe, and in need of some form of order. Through the media, via newspapers, televisions, and radios, these islanders mostly see, hear, or read about most of the world's, as well as the local's, negative images portrayed by the industry.

Despite the corrupt activities taking place on their islands, high costs of living, and low literacy rates, many Micronesians believe that their islands are the safest places to live. Little by little, however, they are beginning to experience social pressures from outside influence to become more involved in solving the local issues and concerns, easing the



tensions of racial disputes, and taking part in the growing East Asian economic ventures. Many of these inhabitants also realize that the changes have only made them more aware of the numerous challenges and pressures in the international political arena that might prevent them from living the kind of life they are most comfortable with. Their awareness of these pressures have generated enough strength for them to be able to combat any challenge they encounter, while pursuing their goals of international identity, sovereignty, and economic self-reliance.

One challenge that the Micronesians are dealing with in this post-Cold War era, is the influx of numerous foreigners from both sides of the Pacific into their small islands. Despite the development that these large numbers of outsiders are providing, this alone, in the views of some Micronesians, is a perceived threat to the security and welfare of the indigenous island people. They fear that the growing number of foreigners will eventually outnumber and outvote them on the issues that are only supposed to be decided upon by the natives themselves. Already there are over 7,500 children of alien workers that are now U.S. citizens<sup>106</sup> simply because they were born on the American territory of the Northern Marianas. Where there is nothing wrong with this today, the citizens of these islands should be informed of the example that the island of Fiji offers with its situation in which the indigenous people are outnumbered by the descendants of outside laborers.

There are very few Micronesians today that are familiar with the consequences of other possible challenges that could easily come about in the future. For example, not many of them realize that if an Asian country like China emerges and becomes a superpower, possessing aircraft carriers and a power-projection capability, their islands could once again serve as outposts and "stepping stones" to another region. The Micronesian people and their governments should be informed of all the possibilities that a great China could do.

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<sup>106</sup>Michael Eastly, "Alien Workers: An Asset Or Drain on Economy," *Pacific Magazine*, vol. 19, no. 6, November/December 1994, p. 17.

If China should fail, the number of refugees to come out of that country of 1.2 billion people could easily be in the millions. This could also present a major problem for the island leaders to deal with if their islands were chosen to serve as safe havens for the refugees.

Other challenges such as natural disasters have even discouraged many major companies from investing in the islands. These disasters are mainly typhoons and cyclones, but there are also occasional tidal waves or tsunamis, earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions in the region, especially in the Marianas. Global warming, greenhouse gas effects, pollution, and rising water levels are just some of the other environmental problems that have also discouraged many potential entrepreneurs from opening up businesses in the area. The island leaders are of course concerned with these issues, but they usually ignore or keep a blind eye to them because of other immediate political issues at hand, like who should they make friends with now and how to win the next election.

The increasing island population, influx of foreigners, exhaustion of local natural resources, scandal and corruption in government and top businesses, power abuses, labor abuses, alcohol and drug abuses, pollution from refuse, factories, and from traffic on some islands, insufficient health care services, and inadequate educational programs, are also of concern to the natives of the islands that the elected officials need to start addressing aggressively. This list may be overly ambitious, but there are still more issues to add. For example, other reasons that have prevented prospective investors in the region, which are perhaps more important to them than the others mentioned earlier, are insufficient facilities like housing, transportation, communications, water, and electricity, all essential to operating a successful business. Another major concern is the lack of local human resources on most islands.

The latter concern, the lack of human resources, have raised many questions because there have been disagreements on just how many skilled foreign laborers should be allowed on the islands to help boost the economy. On the island of Saipan, there are now more foreign laborers living there than indigenous people. Some people actually see this as very good for the island's economy. Others are concerned about the social and

cultural impact it brings on the island's youth and on the overall population. A labor reform, perhaps to allow residence only to those most skillful laborers who can teach the natives the skills and trades they need to develop their islands themselves, may be a solution. But what about those former laborers that have already established permanent residences and families with the locals, and have even become citizens of either the island nation or the United States? Will the insular governments allow them to stay on their islands forever as they continue to bring their relatives from their original countries, sponsor them, and eventually get them to become just like themselves? To the members of the disappearing races on the islands, this would be difficult to accept. But, because everyone of them is a human being with similar desires, basically, "...life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," and "justice for all," it should be understood that there is really no substitute for the things that are happening on the immigration issues facing the island natives. Those foreign laborers that have already established themselves on the islands should not be judged by the color of their skin, their origin, or where and what type of people their parents were. As with everyone else, they should only be judged by their own individual actions, deeds, and beliefs that there's nothing more important than to live under a "decent, stable and effective" system that provides the opportunity to be equal with everyone else, while they all pursue a common goal together.

In dealing with human issues and other problems the island natives are encountering, one should no longer be concerned with trying to make things be like they were in the past. Blaming those that might be credited for the current problems will not do much good. As long as everyone understands them fully, it does not matter anymore how the problems came about. What matters now are the problems at hand, how to deal with them, how to resolve them, and how to prevent similar ones from occurring in the future.

In this post-Cold War period, the Micronesians are no longer concerned about the threat of the former Soviet Union. Because of this, regardless of their geographical handicaps, they have more freedom now to seek national and international identities, political sovereignty, and economic wealth and self-reliance without worrying about a

military threat. However, they have not forgotten about their former colonizers, especially the Japanese. They are also keeping a watchful eye on China, the Philippines, and a strong Korea that is feared to become even stronger if the North and South unite. The Micronesians fear that while they are attempting to engage in the economic growth opportunities in Asia and continuing their improvement projects on their islands, they would end up getting trapped in the region's web of problems that could slow or hinder the islands' development, progress, and prosperity.

The Micronesians are aware that if anything drastic should happen in Asia, their islands will be looked to for safe havens to the refugees that could easily reach several millions. This issue may be a small one now, but it will definitely present a challenge to the island leaders when it comes time for them to deal with it. Furthermore, the Micronesians are also aware that since countries no longer want to fight wars on their land or anywhere close to their borders, the remote Pacific Islands could serve again as the battlegrounds for superpowers to fight their wars on and resolve their conflicts while avoiding all the dangers within or anywhere close to their own borders.

Is there hope for Micronesia? Certainly! But a united Micronesia as an independent nation is very unlikely, or distant at best for obvious reasons: First, there are at least eighteen different languages and ethnicity in the region. Second, some island nations, provided that they continue to receive increases in their economic aid and other development programs, are already on a path to a prosperous economic future. This could be credited to the aid packages from several countries, mainly the United States and Japan. Third, and this may be linked to the first one, is the fact that each island nation is exhibiting a growing ethno-nationalist behavior much more than during the Cold War period. However, issues of establishing a new national defense system, a new national currency, a common language, and determining which island would be the capital, are issues that the Micronesians, at least for now, will not even bother with. But since the major language or lingua-franca (assuming that everyone can speak English), the currency, and defense matters are already common with those of the United States, will a united Micronesia be a likely candidate to be the 51st state of the United States of America? Will

Micronesia ever be able to catch up with Hawaii, California, or Florida? Will those in the United States even bother to welcome a 51st state to add to their already solid union of fifty? Or will the Micronesians continue with the status quo, each relying separately on the United States for currency and security of their islands? Will a European model work in Micronesia? Perhaps, maybe the German model? Or better yet, a British model since England is also an insular country?

Another possibility for each island grouping with a future political status as an independent nation that would allow continued economic growth would be to follow an East Asia model: Japan; China; South Korea; Taiwan; or any of the ASEAN states: the Philippines; Indonesia; Brunei; Singapore; Malaysia; and Thailand.

Prior to choosing a model to follow, the Micronesians need to examine those countries that they are compatible with. They need to look at the stage they are in, the resources they have or can obtain, and the economic base they have. Perhaps, most important to look at, are the basic fundamental values and beliefs that have aided these countries to get to where they are at now. For example, what can the Micronesians find in the East Asian or the Confucian model? Can the Micronesians follow, perhaps, a Southeast Asian model? What can they find in a European or an American model? Should the predominantly Christian Micronesians convert to Confucian values and beliefs just to develop and prosper like the East Asian countries, or should they simply follow those Confucian doctrines that best suit their interests and lifestyles? Or can they achieve their economic goals and still follow their devout Christian Orthodox teachings by slavishly following the West? The Micronesians must also consider the time they need to catch up with any model country they wish to follow. Many events in the past and those still occurring daily in the region are indicators that the Micronesians want to quit dreaming of a more prosperous and perfect future and start the necessary steps to improve the status in which they find themselves at the present moment.

Again, what the United States can do to help the Micronesians and the several thousand Americans living on its territories in the Western Pacific, is increase its level of support at a comfortable pace based on both American and Micronesian standards, and

enhance its relationships with the natives of these islands as they pursue a better future of peace, quiet, and prosperity. This will help achieve the island governments' long term goals of international identity, political sovereignty, and economic self-reliance. Besides, as the most powerful nation in the world, both militarily and economically, the United States should assist its territorial possessions and those micro-states it is responsible for to become prosperous and able to rely on their own limited resources. The latter will reduce tremendously the amount of U.S. Federal aid going to them.

The United States should no longer consider the islands only as strategic outposts, even though they are. It should, however, begin efforts to help the islands be on their way to becoming the American "mini-dragons" of the Pacific. Besides, if it is "prosperity and stability" that we in the United States wish for Micronesia and our territories in the area, then our agreements with the island governments on the forms of provisions for them should be indicated so with effective support for economic development through means and speed acceptable to the island nations whom we have sought to assist.

But, if the United States suddenly reduces its budget and its global commitments significantly, the Micronesian Islands will most likely drop off the Washington list of internal and foreign policy agenda, and eventually suffer drastically if no other country would provide the necessary assistance. If many American blunders in the region occur, major exploitation opportunities on the islands, mostly in the fishing, tourism and other service industries, could open up attractively and enormously to Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and China, as well as to the emerging economies in Southeast Asia and South Pacific. Eventually, the Asian modern technological advances will win the minds and hearts of the island natives and gradually the islanders' allegiance as well.

If the United States fails to attract the island nations to become permanent members of the union as states, or another constitutionally correct status, simply "to form a more perfect union...", they will eventually become fully independent with the rights and strengths to deny the United States access to these strategically important islands. Where self-governance and independence for the islands have always been two of the goals of the United Nations Trusteeship Council charged to the United States, there has also been a

strong reluctance on the part of the United States to let the islands become so independent that they could do the unthinkable, as just described above. In a worse case scenario, if the islands do become fully independent, they could easily fall prey to other emerging powers in the region.

Some Asian countries like Japan, South Korea, and China would be happy to take control over any or all of the islands. These countries are in fixed positions to "catch them on the rebound." Their economic successes as members of the Asian "miracles" make them look very attractive for the islands to fall back on.

The American loss of these islands would be significant, and would create a major need for adjustment and redefinition of the American national security in the entire East Asia/Pacific region. If they are serious about implementing the national strategy of engagement and enlargement, maintaining American values and access rights in the strategically important Micronesian Islands, American officials should begin looking at alternatives to an Asian-controlled Micronesia.

Many of the island leaders now wish that the United States would allow them to become full members of the Union. But there are also about the same number that wish the United States would let them go completely. Those who want only what is best for them wish for the United States to either accept the territories as full members of the Union, or let them go altogether. Either way, the islands will develop their economy, enhance their standard of living, and take part as either equal participants in both American and world affairs or as outside observers of these affairs. But the fastest way for them to reach their goals, however, is to become fully integrated into the American political family.

The United States is called upon to consider thoroughly the two options: statehood and independence. Anything in between is either a violation of the American constitution,<sup>107</sup> or simply immoral because only independence and U.S. statehood are

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<sup>107</sup> Statehood and independence are the only two recognized political status in the United States Constitution. For an excellent review of the unconstitutionality of any other political status in the American political system, see Joseph E. Fallon's *Pacific Affairs* article entitled, "Federal Policy and U.S. Territories:

constitutionally acceptable, and all other options do not recognize the true wishes of the governed. However, United States officials must be aware, as Grant K. Goodman and Felix Moos demonstrate, that "dependence does not by any means automatically terminate by virtue of a legal change in political status."<sup>108</sup> Policy makers in Washington should understand that Guam, the CNMI, FSM, RMI, and ROB, will, for another decade of so, continue to "depend for their very survival on the United States and Japan,"<sup>109</sup> no matter how much the islanders desire to become totally independent. Current economic trends indicate that the natives of these island nations and territories are finally realizing that they cannot depend forever on other countries and are doing everything possible to become self-reliant with what little resource they have. Reductions in the assistance the islands get should be paralleled to the gains they make on their own. Their efforts toward self-reliance should be rewarded with more incentives to promote and continue toward that goal.

Because the people of these island nations are also pursuing the political status they believe can help improve their islands' economy and standard of living, the United States is called upon to consider, even more thoroughly, a statehood status for all or some of the islands. If not statehood, then the islands should be assisted toward complete independence during the first decade of the next century. The other political status is not consistent with the American values found in the United States Constitution and other U.S. literature.

Another conclusion reached from this study suggests that the United States Federal Government will be in a more advantageous position if it accepts its territories in the Western Pacific as full and equal members of the Union than if the islands exist under a different status. In compliance with UN resolutions on self-determination, this, of course,

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The Political Restructuring of the United States of America."

<sup>108</sup> Grant K. Goodman and Felix Moos, eds., "The United States and Japan in the Western Pacific: Micronesia and Papua New Guinea," (Boulder: Westview Press, 1981), p. iii.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.



has to be decided only by the indigenous people. The people's desire to become full members of the American political system should be indicated in legally established plebiscites or referendums.

To begin welcoming the islands into the American family, all U.S. policies toward the American territories in the Pacific should be non-discriminatory and inclusive just as if the islands are already full members of the Union. After all, the Guamanians, Rotanese, Tinianese, Saipanese, and the other natives of the Mariana Islands are mostly American citizens. The very few that are not, are American nationals like most citizens of American Samoa, yet, they have almost the same rights, privileges, and benefits as any American does.

The natives of the American territories in the Pacific would also gain more with a statehood political status than if they would become totally independent. They would be eligible to vote for President and have representation in the United States Congress and Senate. They would also be eligible to receive more federal support for development. More importantly, the natives will no longer be secondary American citizens and will be able to take part as full members of the American political family and in dealing with all issues affecting every American.

If efforts for American statehood fail, or if the people of the area do not want statehood, then the United States should release the islands altogether and assist them in their transition towards full independence. At a pace set by both Americans and Micronesians, the United States should gradually help the islands achieve their goals. Of course, if the island citizens choose to become independent, then agreements should be established between the island nations and the United States Federal Government to secure American access rights to the area in order "...to enable it [the United States] to carry out its defense responsibilities"<sup>110</sup> and protect its national interests in the entire East Asia/Pacific region.

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<sup>110</sup> Article VIII, Section 802, U.S. Public Law 94-241 (90 Stat. 263). p.18.

It seems, however, that the islanders enjoy their current status despite their problems with sovereignty, and the little support they get from the United States. This can only be based on one fact: the islanders' cunning ability to play the U.S. Federal Government and other countries while they get the best of both worlds. So far, it appears as if the island governments are only holding on to their current political status and association with the United States simply because they still cannot become totally independent, at least for the next decade. They appear also as if they do not want to give up some of the benefits they get from the Federal Government, their local control, and their indigenous and unique characteristics. Obviously, some of the political issues and challenges mentioned above are not only the fault of the United States, but also the fault of the Micronesian nations themselves, and that no one government deserves all the blame. The Micronesians, however, realize that inter-dependence between them and the United States is of mutual benefit, and that they are also pursuing the same type of inter-dependence with other countries, particularly Japan, China, and Korea. They realize that if they could only open up more to the emerging markets in the region, even at the expense of losing their unique characteristics, they could easily become like them.



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## INTERVIEWS

**Blas, Segundo L.G.** A Saipanese and a Self-Made Island Historian now Living on Guam. Notes of Personal Interviews and Recollections of Numerous Conversation Topics on Micronesian Affairs, Including First Account Historical Events from the Japanese and Early American Eras in the Region, Micronesian Cultures, Arts, and Traditions. The sessions took place periodically, almost nightly, when the author lived with Mr. Blas from June 1977 through February 1979.

**Camacho, Oscar C.** A Saipanese Deputy Director of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Department of Labor and Commerce. Personal Interview, Alexandria, Virginia, 18 June 1993. (A second interview took place at As Matuis, Saipan, the residence of Oscar Camacho and his lovely wife, the former **Arinta Joseph**, a native of the Mortlock Islands in the state of Chuuk, Federated States of Micronesia. During the interview session, on 10-12 February 1995, Mr. Camacho was the Director of Labor and Commerce while also serving as the Banking Commissioner for the government of the Northern Marianas.)

**The Late Nahnmwarki of Mahdelehnium.** A Pohnpeian who witnessed the administrations of the Micronesian Islands under three powers before recently passing away. Unpublished Notes of Recollections from the Casual Conversations that took place on 26 May 1985, Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia.

**Santos, Henoleen U.** A Pohnpeian Native Living in Monterey. Personal Interview, Monterey, California, 16 January 1994.

**Santos, Elpina U.** A Pohnpeian Native and Mother of Henoleen Santos. Personal Interview, Monterey, California, (The interviews were held during Ms. Santos's visit to Monterey in June to September 1994. Ms. Santos's daughter, Henoleen provided the most needed translations from English to Pohnpeian and vice or versa).

**Semes, Herman Jr. and wife Norma.** Both are Pohnpeian natives now living in Monterey. Herman studies Political Science at the Golden Gate University in San Francisco. Personal Interview, Monterey, California, 14 March 1994.

**Timothy, Mearle and wife Angie.** Both are natives of Kosrae and now live on the Presidio of Monterey Annex, formerly Fort Ord, California. They were accompanied by their nephew, **Jason Timothy** during the Personal Interview, 22 September 1994.



## APPENDIX

### THE ROLE OF THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

The U.S. Department of the Interior has, for over a century, been the federal government's lead agency on territorial and insular affairs. When Congress created the Department of the Interior in 1849, the new Department had at the outset certain responsibilities for the territories of the United States. At that time, all of the territories were located in the continental United States, and all of them ultimately became states.

But in 1867, the United States acquired a new kind of territory--Alaska--the first sizable territory outside the contiguous United States. In 1873, Congress granted the Department specific statutory responsibility to exercise "all the powers and perform all the duties in relation to the territories of the United States" that were at that time "by law or by custom exercised and performed by the Secretary of State".

Toward the end of the 1800's, the U.S. had acquired only a few small, largely unoccupied islands in the Pacific and Caribbean. The Spanish-American War significantly changed the picture. As a result of that war, the United States suddenly acquired such diverse and heavily populated islands as Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines. In 1898 Hawaii was annexed, and by treaty American Samoa and the U.S. Virgin Islands followed. The islands were often administered by different departments--usually the Navy Department or the War Department.

In the first years of the 20th century, Presidents Theodore Roosevelt and William Howard Taft attempted to bring order to the administration of territories. President Roosevelt, in 1907, directed that the Interior Department coordinate all communications with the insular areas.

Today, the U.S. Department of the Interior remains at the center of Federal responsibility for these areas.

### HISTORY OF THE OFFICE OF TERRITORIAL AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

The Office of Territorial and International Affairs (OTIA) traces its roots back to 1934, when President Franklin D. Roosevelt created the Division of Territories and Island Possessions in the Department of the Interior. The new division was assigned oversight of Alaska, Hawaii, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. Soon after, OTIA was also assigned the Philippines, and after World War II, President Harry S. Truman added Guam, American Samoa, and the newly created Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands to the Division's jurisdiction.



In 1950, the Division became the Office of Territories, which had the status of a bureau in the Department of the Interior. During the next two decades, the Office of Territories oversaw the progress of many territories toward other forms of government. Puerto Rico became a commonwealth in 1952; Alaska and Hawaii became states in 1959. Both Guam and the U.S. Virgin Islands began electing their own governors in 1970, and in 1972, each began electing a delegate to the U.S. House of Representatives.

In 1973, Interior created the Office of Territorial Affairs as part of the Office of the Secretary of the Interior. And in 1980, the Secretary of the Interior created the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Territorial and International Affairs to bring the Department's territorial and international responsibilities together at the Assistant Secretary level.

Today, the Office of Territorial and International Affairs (OTIA) is the principal staff office of the Secretary of the Interior for all insular matters.

#### **TODAY'S MISSION OF THE OFFICE OF TERRITORIAL AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS**

The mission of OTIA is to promote the economic, social and political development of the insular areas. OTIA is a channel of communication with the insular governments for making their needs known to other federal agencies and the Congress, identifying problems, and offering solutions. OTIA's role is to assist the Secretary in carrying out his responsibilities (contained in various statutes and Executive Orders) that relate to the territories, commonwealth, freely associated states, and the Trust Territory.

(During the writing of these thesis, the Trust Territory had already ceased to exist. The Republic of Belau, or ROB, was the last of the "strategic trust" under the former U.S. Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands).

The Office of Territorial and International Affairs has administrative responsibility for coordinating federal policy in the U.S. territories of American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. OTIA also oversees federal programs in the freely associated states of the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia. In addition, OTIA exercises administrative authority over the Republic of Palau, which remains a United Nations trust territory. (Palau is now known as the Republic of Belau which became the 185th member of the U.N. in 1994, and since then has been independent. Like the RMI and the FSM, ROB has a free association relationship with the United States).

OTIA has an active technical assistance program for projects in many fields, including health, education, marine resources, fiscal management, economic development and investment promotion. OTIA also assists insular governments in improving their financial management systems.

It should be noted that the Department of the Interior does not have administrative responsibility for the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. Information on Puerto Rico may be obtained from: Puerto Rico Federal Affairs Administration, 1100 17th Street, N.W. Suite 800 Washington, D.C. 20036. Phone: (202) 778-0710, Fax: (202) 778-0721.

Source: "Investment Opportunities in United States Insular Areas and Freely Associated States." A promotional pamphlet produced by the U.S. Department Of The Interior, Office of Territorial and International Affairs, 1849 C Street, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20240. Phone: (202) 208-6816, Fax: (202) 208-3390.



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